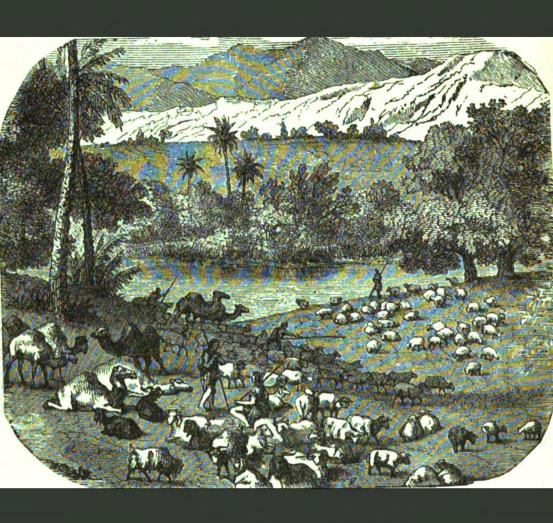
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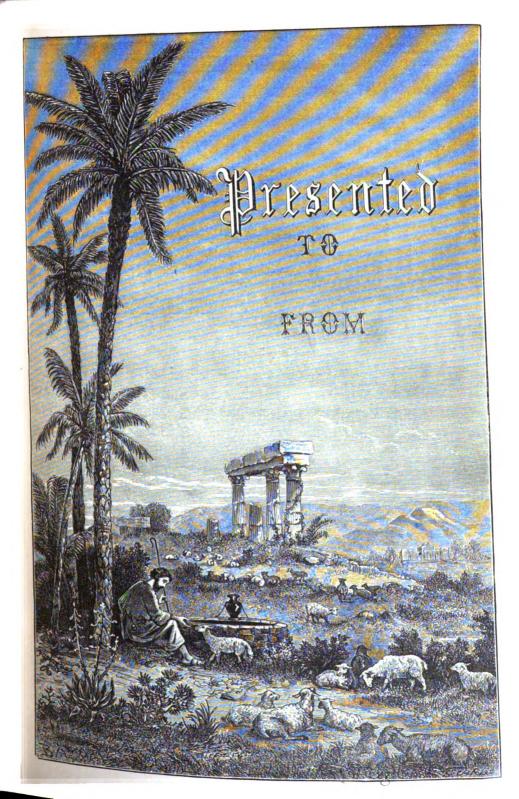
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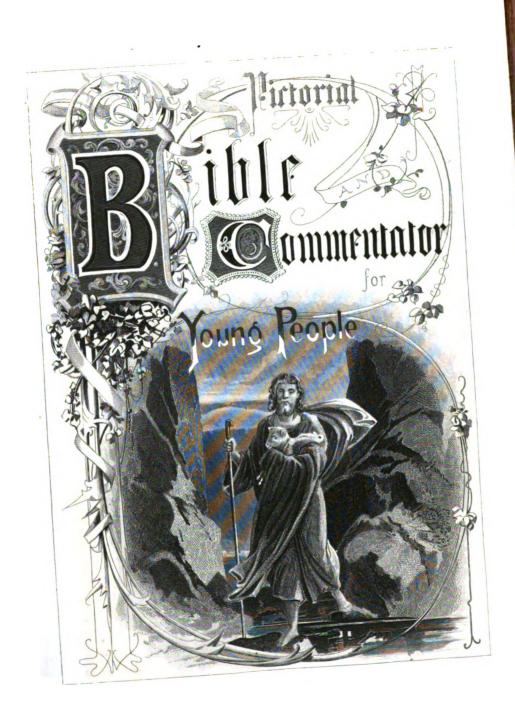


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### THE PICTORIAL

# BIBLE COMMENTATOR:

PRESENTING

## THE GREAT TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD IN THE MOST SIMPLE, PLEASING, APPECTIONATE, AND INSTRUCTIVE MANNER.

BY INGRAM COBBIN, V. D. M.

AUTHOR OF "DOMESTIC BIBLE;" "PORTABLE COMMENTARY;" "ILLUSTRATED NEW TESTAMENT," ETC., ETC.

#### A NEW EDITION.

Carefully Revised, Improved, and Enlarged.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, SHOWING THE PURPOSE OF THE REVEALED WORD; CHAPTERS ON THE CREATIVE WORK, A FULLER EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECIES, THE APOCRYPHA, HISTORY OF THE JEWS, AND A FULL DESCRIPTION OF PALESTINE, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND FULL COMMENTABY ON IT, HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC LABORS IN ASIA MINOR, AN ELABORATE BIOGRAPHY OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.

Also, Hesba Stretton's "Wonderful Life" of Jesus Christ.

#### ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL AIDS TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ARRANGED SO AS BEST TO ASSIST RESEARCH AND CONTRIBUTE

TO A FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INSPIRED WORD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY REV. DANIEL MARCH, D. D.

#### WITH OVER 450 ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

BRADLEY, GARRETSON & CO., PHILADELPHIA, 66 NORTH FOURTH STREET. BRANTFORD, ONT.

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### Introduction.

HIS attractive and beautiful book, with its clear and simple yet graphic style, and its abundant illustrations, is an attempt to set the sacred truths of the Bible before the intelligent and thoughtful reader, in such a manner as to charm the eye, instruct the mind, and move the heart.

The writer of this Commentary has not attempted to improve upon the Divine record, or to explain those things which are easily and readily understood as they stand upon the sacred page. But wherever there is any serious difficulty, in comprehending that which the Holy Spirit has communicated to men in the word of God, on the part of the reader, he has endeavored, in the

plainest and simplest terms, to shed new light upon the blessed word. Believing. as he evidently does with his whole heart, that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, and that the design of all the revealed word of God is to exhibit the plan of redemption wrought out by him, and to show how, throughout the ages, his coming was heralded, even from Eden, till in the fulness of time he came to be our Redeemer, he makes this purpose of God the key-note of the Commentary; and whatever will aid in its demonstration, whether it be description, history, geography, argument, or simple narrative, is employed freely. In short, the aim and object of the writer is to justify the ways of God to man, and to show how full of mercy and goodness they are. Yet it is as far as possible from his purpose to put anything in the place of the Bible, or to write anything more interesting than the simple and sublime story of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs. He does not presume to improve upon the precepts and instructions that came fresh and living from the lips of the Son of God. He would only gather his readers around him and show them where and how to look, while the awful and glorious vision of Divine revelation is unrolled before them. He does not hold up a taper to give them an illustration of the sun, but he takes them by the hand and leads them out into the broad day, when the sun himself is filling the earth and the heavens with his glorious light.

This Commentary does not assume that the Bible is a blind book, and must needs be explained, or it will not be understood by those who read it. Nor does it imply that it is a dull book, and must be made interesting by all the artifices of the novelist or word-painter, or it will never be read. Nor does it give its readers the impression that the Bible is an antiquated and obsolete work which must be mod-

ernized and improved, or it will have to give place to the fresher and more impressive thought of our own time. On the contrary, it is the object of the author of this Commentary to show his readers that the Bible is the book for all times, all places, and all circumstances; that it is the most original, fresh, plain, and interesting book that ever has been or ever will be written; and that its saints, its heroes, and its martyrs are representative men for the whole human race.

The lesson of the sacred story is sometimes rehearsed anew, and in modern phrase, not to give a clearer version of what was written in olden times, but to secure a change of position, and show the inspired picture in a different light, that the reader may see it better and love it more. The best comment is that which brings the reader's mind into closest contact with the word as written. That word is ever so pure, simple, and expressive, that it needs only to find entrance to the heart, and it will enlighten the eyes and convert the soul.

Many books have been written, and much learning expended, in the effort to show that only those who were thoroughly versed in the languages in which the Bible was originally written, and in the history, social customs, and manners, and the literature of the nations among which it had its birth, could rightly understand it; but such an idea is utterly unworthy of the Christian, and savors of the bigotry and exclusiveness of the dark ages. The greater part of the Scriptures, all that is necessary to show us the way of salvation, is within the comprehension of the simplest and humblest, and will educate and elevate their minds as nothing else can. There are some passages which can be more clearly understood, and will receive added force, by a knowledge of the circumstances under which they were spoken or written, and the habits and customs of the people to whom they were first uttered; and in very rare instances, it is possible that our English translation fails to convey the full force of the original expression. But even these exceptional cases are provided for in this Commentary, which, while carefully avoiding all display of learning, gives in simple and clear language the results of the profound and extensive research of the past two centuries, on all points, where there is a necessity for them.

It is due to the author and revisers of this work also, that we should speak of some of the new features which have been added to the present edition. The introduction to the Old Testament is conceived in perfect harmony with the original idea of the work, and shows with great force and clearness that the Old Testament Scriptures were intended as God's revelation of his purpose of mercy in bestowing, in the fulness of time, his greatest and best of gifts to fallen man.

The first chapters of Genesis have been rewritten with the same purpose in view, and give a theory of the preparation of the earth to be the habitation of man, which, while explaining the creative day satisfactorily, removes the whole subject from the realm of the geologist, and disposes at once and forever of all the cavils of the scientist. The weakness and folly of the Darwinian theory of the origin of man is shown by a few masterly touches; and the deep guilt involved in the first transgression effectively demonstrated. Throughout the Old Testament there are passages which show great care in treating the really difficult topics. At the close of the Old Testament, a brief but very interesting history of the Jews, from the captivity to the destruction of Jerusalem, a period only alluded to in the Scriptures, is given, which throws much light on many passages of the New Testament.

This is followed by a descriptive history and geography of the Holy Land, so comprehensive, complete, and interesting, that it deserves to be published as a separate treatise. An introduction to the New Testament carries out and illustrates the idea that the Scriptures are indeed Testaments—the revelation of God's will or purposes of mercy to man, and that the expansion of those purposes, to include the whole human family, as well as the chosen nation, is first fully set forth in the New Testament. The questions of the authenticity and inspiration of each of the books of the New Testament, and of their exclusive right to a place in the canon of Scripture, are handled with great simplicity and clearness. In the books of the New Testament, the hand of the careful reviser is clearly seen, and a history of Asia Minor in the time of the apostles, and an admirable biography of St. John the Divine, have been added to the work. The publishers have also appended, very wisely, that charming life of our Saviour, by Hesba Stretton, known as "The Wonderful Life."

The engravings and illustrations scattered so abundantly through this book greatly increase its value. To young and old they teach more vividly and impressively than words. No verbal description, however accurate and minute, can be worth anything like as much to the reader as the plainest picture of the thing described. One glance at the rudest outline of Jerusalem will fix its form and situation more deeply in the memory than a whole volume of verbal description.

It would be too much to expect that every one of the four hundred and fifty illustrations found in this book should be drawn and engraved in the highest style of art, or that none should fail to give a true impression of the places and the people, the customs and modes of living in the Bible lands. And yet in all this large number very few will fail to carry back the reader to the times of old, and to make him better acquainted with the men who lived when angels came and sat in the shade of oaks at the shepherd's tent-door, and the word of the Lord was given by miracle and vision and prophecy.

The original works of the Italian, and Flemish, and Spanish schools of art are very wonderful in coloring and in composition, but they are seldom true to the Bible story; they give very imperfect views of people and customs in the Bible times. The Bible student will find more in the pictures which form a part of this Commentary, to help him understand the Scriptures, than he would in all the works of Raphael and Rubens, of Michael Angelo and Murillo.

These illustrations take the reader out into the pasture-grounds of the patriarchs and show him the sheep and the goats, the flock and the fold, the well and the fountain, just as Isaac and Jacob saw them at Beersheba and Bethel and Shechem. He wanders with the great household over hill and plain in the glow of the morning, and rests in the hot noon under the shadow of the shepherd's tent. He goes down into Egypt, sees the brick-making and the brute-worship in the house of bondage, and then joins the great emigration under Moses. He beholds the tents of the tribes and the tabernacle of the congregation in the long wandering of the wilderness. He comes with the conquering host into the land of promise, and surveys its mountains, and hills, and valleys, its cities and high places and strongholds. As he goes on with the sacred history, his eye becomes familiar with all the occupations and all the aspects of human life in the Holy Land. He sees the sower scattering seed and the birds of the air following to

devour it up. He sees the gleaners following the reapers and the harvesters binding the sheaves, purging the threshing-floor and storing the wheat in the garner. He goes out with the husbandman in the morning to see the laborers in the field, and he sits by the village four tain when the women come at evening to bring water. He visits the vineyard when the vintagers are treading out the grapes; he walks by the seaside, when the fishermen are casting their nets; he looks up to the hills at sunrise, and sees the shepherd seeking pasturage and the flock following his steps whithersoever he goeth. He sits in the city gate and sees the conqueror coming home from distant war, and captive kings chained and following in his train. He stands as a spectator in the banqueting-hall when meats steam, and flowers blossom, and wine runs redder than blood, and he walks around outside the city wall, where mourners rend their garments and sit in sackcloth and ashes.

All these things, and a thousand others, are set before the eye of the reader in pictorial illustration, and so he receives a far more definite and lasting impression of Bible times, lands, and people, than could ever be given by verbal description alone. The sacred record becomes to him a living book, and its spiritual truths are so bound up in earthly and material forms that he can grasp their meaning and carry it with him through all the journey of life. The great lessons of courage and constancy, and faith, and love, are set before him in such a companionable and every-day dress, that he is insensibly drawn into sympathy with saints, and heroes, and apostles, and martyrs. He makes them the companions of his best hours, and he learns to imitate the best things in their lives. The holy men of old walk with the men of the living age, and the blessing of the fathers descends to the children from generation to generation.

The style and the whole execution of the work are well fitted to secure so great and good a result. The entrance of the book into the house and the careful study of its sacred lessons will begin a new era of light and instruction for the household.



### TO THE READER.

HE Pictorial Bible Commentator for the Young, of the late Ingram Cobbin, has been a work of great success and popularity; but the time having arrived, when there was a necessity for some changes, which should better adapt it to the use of families, we have procured its revision by able Christian writers, of the highest repute, who have sought to explain, in accordance with the latest and best results of Biblical criticism, those portions of the word of God, against which infidels and scoffers have made their

most violent assaults; and to show that the Book of Revelation and the Book of Nature are in harmony with each other. We have also caused the prophetical books to be treated at greater length; have given an account of the books known as the Apocrypha; have added a History of the Jews, from the captivity to the destruction of Jerusalem; and a Geography and History of the Holy Land, with a map of the same, from the pens of eminent scholars, and which will be of great interest, from their connecting each city, town, mountain and valley, with some event in the Bible history of the country.

We have had an Introduction to the New Testament prepared, which shows why all its books are regarded as inspired, and also as the only books entitled to a place there, and gives the design and purpose of the New Testament. The Commentary on the Gospels and Acts has been carefully revised, and additions made where needed; a History and Map of Asis. Minor, including the labors of the Apostles Paul, Peter and John, and an elaborate and interesting Life of St. John, by the well-known biographical writer, Dr. L. P. Brockett, have been added; while the condensed but excellent Life of Christ, entitled "The Wonderful Life," by Hesba Stretton, completes the work. In all we have added about three hundred pages, and many new illustrations to the work. We think we may safely commend it to all Christian people, as, by far, the most complete and comprehensive commentary on the entire Scriptures in one volume ever published, and the testimony of many eminent clergymen and laymen, who have carefully examined it, confirms us in this opinion.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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### THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HE word Bible means THE BOOK, because it is the best of all books, the one book which contains all that is needful to teach every one the way of salvation. This blessed book is also called THE SCRIPTURES, which means The writings, because these are the writings, or messages, which God has sent to man. If you take up any of our English Bibles, and look at the title page, you will read: "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments." The word Testament means a will, or manifestation of the benevolent

intentions of a person toward kindred and friends. Among men, this testament, or will, only takes effect after the death of the person who makes it, and the testator can alter or change it, to the last day of his life, and it is usually only the last or latest will or testament which is held to be valid.

But God is not only infinitely wise, and just, and benevolent, but he is also eternal, or ever living, and so when he declares his will or intentions toward us, since he can never die, he graciously allows us to come into the immediate, or speedy possession of the blessings which he has in store forms. His will or intentions of love toward us have never changed, and though more than sixteen hundred years were consumed in the communication of the different books or portions which go to make up his will, yet there is the same great purpose and plan running through the whole of it, perhaps more fully displayed in the later, than in the earlier portions, but so plain in all, that none need fail to comprehend it.\*

So, when we read about the "Old," or earlier, and the "New," or later Testament, we are not to suppose that what is called the "Old Testament" is like an old will, which a man has made and thrown aside as worthless, because, for some reason, he prefers to make a later will, and a different disposition of his property. God does not change: he is the same, yester-

<sup>\*</sup> The Greek word, which, in the title pages of our Bibles, is translated Testament, is, in some passages in the New Testament, rendered Covenant; but this word, as it is used there, expresses almost precisely the same idea which we have explained above; that of the voluntary obligation which God has assumed to grant us redemption through the sacrifice of his Son; and as God is ever-living, it is, perhaps, more strictly correct to speak of this obligation as a Covenant between him and us, than as a Testament or will, which would only become valid on the death of the testator. But our English Bibles have so accustomed us to the use of the word Testament that we have adopted it in this work.

day, to-day, and forever; and what he willed three thousand years ago, that he wills to-day. The two Testaments are but parts of one and the same manifestation of his love and good will towards us, though expressed in different ways and under different circumstances, so far as man is concerned.

Very often, indeed, almost always, the man who would make a will or execute a deed of gift, employs another man, usually a lawyer or notary, to draw up the papers for him. He tells this man what his ideas are, and the lawyer or notary writes them down, using such language in expressing them, as best accords with the legal forms of the time. So, the great God, in communicating his will to man, has employed men to write it out in human language; and while he has revealed to them, or inspired them with the thoughts which he wished men to know, he has allowed each man to express these thoughts, under the Divine superintendence, in the wor s which he would naturally choose. They were all good men, and their words were good, but the thoughts were God's thoughts. There were probably about forty of these writers, in the Old and New Testaments, and each one had his peculiarities of style and manner; but, as we shall show you by and by, the books written by them, when compared with the best books which have been written by men whom God did not inspire, show a very wonderful difference, and prove that God's thoughts are not like our thoughts.

The Jews, for whom all these books of the Old Testament were first written, divided them into three classes, viz.: I. THE LAW, which was also called the Pentateuch or Five Books, and comprised the five books usually supposed to have been written by Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. II. The Prophets, in which they included not only the prophetical books which we recognize under that name—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the smaller prophecies, twelve in number, from Hosea to Malachi—but also the books of Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings. III. "The Sacred Writings," which included the three poetical books, Psalms, Proverbs and Job; "the Five Rolls," Solomon's Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther; and the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and First and Second Chronicles. This was the arrangement at the time our Saviour was on But it was not a very good one; and the Jews who spoke the Greek language, and had had the Old Testament translated into Greek, adopted in that translation the different, and in many respects better one, which we have in our English Bibles.

Let us look at this arrangement of the books of the Old Testament a lit-

tle, and see what was God's plan in causing this portion of his will to be made known to us in writing. We shall find that he begins by telling us how this world and all worlds were created; how this world was fitted to become the habitation of man; how man was created, and put in a beautiful garden, and the first woman given to him for a companion; how they disobeyed God's commands, and did that which he told them not to do, being tempted to this disobedience by an evil spirit; how they were driven out of the beautiful garden; how they had three sons and several daughters; how one of these sons quarrelled with another, and killed him, and thenceforth went away from his parents, and his children became very wicked: how the children and descendants of the third son, Seth, were good, and obeyed God for a considerable time; how finally all became so wicked, except one family, that God destroyed them, and sent his flood to drown the world; that it was peopled anew from this family of Noah. Then, after some general description of Noah's other descendants, God gives a more particular account of the descendants of Shem, and of his grandson Eber, and of his descendant in the seventh generation, Abraham, who with his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, were the founders of the Jewish or Hebrew nation.

Thenceforward the historical narrative is occupied mainly with the history and movements of the descendants of these three men, who eventually occupied almost the whole of Palestine, and particularly with the Jewish nation, the descendants of Jacob. It relates their migration into Egypt, and their return, more than four hundred years later, to Palestine. long journey in the wilderness, their organization there into a compact and civilized nation; the establishment of laws, government, and religious rites and ceremonies; describes how their first government acknowledged only God as their Supreme Ruler, and that the judges, rulers, and lawgivers who governed them under him, were selected by his will. After a time, they became restive under this control, and desired to imitate the nations around them in having a king, as they had already often imitated them in falling into the worship of idols. We are told that God permitted them to have kings, some of whom were both good and great men, and among the number David, the sweetest poet, as well as the bravest commander in all their history; Solomon, the wisest of men; Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, all good and judicious rulers. But the greater number of their kings were bad men, and taught the people to worship idols, and to disobey God. Yet God was very merciful and loving to the Jewish nation, and he

not only caused these good kings to write many psalms, and poems, and books of instruction for them-all of which he has made a part of his will or testament—but he raised up many prophets and teachers to warn and instruct them; and these warnings and prophecies are also written down for our instruction. At length, they became so wicked, that he caused, first, the kingdom of Israel-for they had divided into two distinct and often hostile kingdoms—to be conquered by their enemies, and the people to be carried into captivity, among the nations of the East, from whence very few of them ever returned to their own land. This destruction of their sister nation did not have any permanent good effect on the kingdom of Judah. and, one hundred and thirty-two years later, they also were carried into captivity in Babylon, and subsequently scattered through Media and Persia. and their beautiful temple, built by Solomon, was destroyed. At the end of seventy years, a portion of these captives, or rather their descendants, returned to Jerusalem and its neighborhood, probably not more than 45,-000 or 50,000 at first, and rebuilt the temple. Henceforward they were not idolaters; but, at the coming of Christ to the earth, more than four hundred years later, they were formalists, worldly, ambitious, and haughty.

We find most of the Old Testament, then, occupied with the history of this one Jewish nation, and what there is of other history is given mainly in its relation to them; what there is of poetry and literature is their poetry and literature, and describes their conditions and history, and their country; what there is of prophecy, relates mainly to them, or to the nations which had made war upon them; though, occasionally, some other nations are the subjects of prophetic denunciation; and the picture of a more glorious future, under the reign of the Messiah, is portrayed with wonderful beauty. But, taken as a whole, we may say, that from the beginning of the book of Exodus to the closing chapter of Malachi, the Old Testament is devoted to the history, the condition, the wanderings, backslidings, and crimes of the Jewish nation, and to their tardy and incomplete repentance.

You will see, then, that when God communicated to his servants what they should say in this Old or earlier Testament, he did not intend to make a history, though all the history that is given incidentally is true; he did not intend that it should be a treatise on science, explaining either how the world was made, or how animals or man grew up in their present forms and with their present habits, or how trees, plants and flowers, or minerals, were produced; though all the allusions to these matters, if rightly understood, are perfectly in accord with true science; nor is it a

volume of poetry and description, though some of the loftiest poetry, and the most vivid description in the whole range of literature is found in it; nor a book of philosophy, though it deals with the grandest problems of philosophy which the human mind can consider. No! God had a higher, grander purpose than this, or he would never have communicated his thoughts and his will to men:

And what was this great purpose and plan, which prompted him thus to make known his ways to man? It was just this:

God is not only all-wise and all-powerful, but he is all-seeing and all-Whatever has been, in all the past, whatever now is, in all parts of his universe, and whatever shall be in the future, is all perfectly known to him, and as much present to his all-seeing eye, as the open page of a book is to us. He knew that the human beings whom he created and placed in the garden of Eden would sin against him, through the temptation of the devil; and knowing this, ages before they were created, his thoughts of mercy toward them were so great and good, that he had devised a plan for their salvation and for the salvation of all their descendants, who would accept forgiveness on the terms which he offered to them. This plan provided that in the fulness of time, his Son (in his relation to man), equal and one with him in all power, and dignity, and glory, should come to this earth, should be born as the child of an earthly mother, the descendant of the man and woman who had fallen in Eden, and should live, teach, suffer, and die by the death of the cross, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; that he should rise from the dead; appear before men in this new life, and ascend into heaven, to resume his former glory.

The Old Testament, then, is God's record of the history and progress of his plan of the redemption of this world from its bondage to sin. And his way of revealing this plan of mercy to man is as wonderful as the plan itself. Man's way would have been (if we may suppose, without irreverence, that man could have comprehended such a scheme of redemption) to have announced this wondrous gift, a few years before its consummation, and repeating the announcement, at stated intervals, at length to have introduced the Saviour of men with all the pomp and display which it was positible for earth to bestow upon her King and Lord.

This was not God's way. Four thousand years before his coming, when the first pair had sinned and been driven from Paradise, he had promised to them that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent or the tempter; and from that day forward, for four thousand years, the preparations for the coming of that Saviour, thus promised, went on continuously, "hasting not and resting not."

It was the seed or descendant of the woman which should bruise the head of the serpent, and Adam and Eve looked for this promised deliverer in their first-born son; but that was not God's plan. The descendants of Seth, the third son, were those from whence the Messiah should spring; and of these, only Noah was deemed worthy to transmit the blessing past the flood; and of his three sons, the second alone, Shem, was chosen. For ten generations the promise seemed forgotten by men; but God had not forgotten it, and in the tenth generation, he called Abraham, a younger son of Terah, to a life of holiness and purity before him, and renewed to him the promise of a Redeemer to come. In the generations which followed, it was Isaac and not Ishmael, it was Jacob and not Esau, it was Judah, the fourth son, and not Reuben, the first-born, nor Joseph, the eldest son of the favorite wife, through whom the promise was transmitted.

And when, two hundred and sixty years later, the descendants of Jacob, a mighty host, some millions in number, marched out of Egypt, under the leadership of their great lawgiver, and became, under his training, a civilized nation, there ran through all their laws, their sacrifices and observances, as well as through the predictions and declarations of Moses, the central thought, that there was to be, in the coming time, a great atoning sacrifice for human transgression, the prophet, priest and king; typified by the paschal lamb, foreshadowed by the scape-goat over which their sins were confessed, and still more strongly prefigured by the sacrifice for the sins of the whole people, offered by the high priest, once a year, ere he ventured to draw nigh to the most Holy Place.

In thousands of Hebrew households, holy men and women and well-instructed children looked forward with eager eyes, past the sacrifices and burnt-offerings, past the clouds of incense, which rose from the altar of the Tabernacle, to the coming of Him who should redeem His people from their sins; and this earnest longing elevated their souls, while it added beauty to their faces, and comeliness to their forms. In the five hundred years that followed their entrance into Canaan, under the rule of Joshua and the judges, while there was a general falling away from the purity of the Tabernacle worship, and frequent lapses into idolatry, yet there were many who still waited for the Messiah, the anointed of God, the consolation of Israel. With the beginning of the monarchy there came a more general observance of the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, and this reformation in morals and

religious worship was greatly increased during the reigns of David and Solomon, by the establishment of a systematic ceremonial, the composition of a ritual and responsive services by David, whose sweet psalms added much to its interest; and by the building of the temple, and the organization of the priests into semi-monthly classes for the temple worship. At this time also began those prophetic and lyrical utterances, which so minutely described the coming, the appearance, and the mission of the Messiah.

For five hundred years, these prophetic voices rehearsed, often to unwilling ears, the beneficence and glory of the reign of the coming Messiah; they described in detail, his birth, his circumstances, the reluctance of the leaders of the people to receive him, his wonderful miracles, his humiliation, his death, his resurrection and his ascension. As the appointed time drew nearer, their predictions gathered force and fervor, till they seemed to stand upon the mount of God, and to be eye-witnesses of his incarnation.

Yet the five hundred years passed, and as yet he came not, for all the preparations for his coming were not completed. The chosen people, set apart by God to be the nation from whom, according to the flesh, Christ should be born, and who were to be the sole custodians of the word of God, as thus far revealed, had so largely lost sight of their exalted privileges and destiny, that they had fallen into the idolatrous customs and worship of the nations around them; and forgetting all the mercies which God had bestowed upon them, had forsaken him, and his worship and service. They were made the prey of foreign and powerful nations; their beautiful temple destroyed, and themselves carried into captivity.

But, in seventy years, God had brought them back purged of their idolatries, and more ready to serve him than before. Their records and genealogies and the sacred books had been carefully preserved; their temple was rebuilt, and amid many vicissitudes, but with numerous predictions of a coming Redeemer, from the prophets of the restoration, they awaited yet for four hundred years the appearance of the Messiah. In all this long period, God had kept them apart from all other nations as a peculiar people, through whom the oracles of God should be preserved, and from whom the great Redeemer, of the world, and not simply of their own nation, should spring. In the completion of this purpose of the Almighty, was the Old Testament, the earlier revelation of the will of God, finished.

Thus, then, do we find the name which from time immemorial has been affixed to this portion of the Scriptures, the Old Testament, fully justified.

It was the revelation of God's will and purpose toward man; the history and description of the steps of preparation for, and the character of, the wonderful, the unspeakable, the heavenly Gift, which God had promised to man through all the ages; it was the descriptive title-deed of man's inheritance in an immortality of blessedness. Armed with the promises of this Testament, trusting implicitly in their fulfilment "at the end of the days," patriarch and lawgiver, the sweet singers of Israel, and the priests who saw beyond the veil, the prophets and seers who beheld the Messiah's glory from afar, went up to the throne of God to claim their heavenly inheritance purchased through His blood, and all received it in His name.



# GENESIS.

HIS is the first book of the Bible and of the Old Testament. The name "Genesis" means "the beginning, the origination, or the creation;" and it is so called probably from the first words of the first verse: "In the beginning." It tells us of the beginning of this world, and of the beginning of man's existence, and the way in which he was created by the Almighty God. It tells us also how man disobeyed God and lost his favor; how the descendants of the first man and woman became so wicked that God drowned

them all in a great flood, except Noah and his family, and after the flood traces the family of Noah, and especially the descendants of Shem, for nearly seven hundred years, to the death of Joseph. It tells us all about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the children of each; and gives us many lessons of faith and trust in God, and shows us that even in that remote period the coming of a Saviour was expected. According to the best chronological tables, the book of Genesis covers a period of about 2,369 years. It was written by Moses, though portions of it may have been compiled from earlier documents or traditions, handed down from the patriarchs before or after the flood. But every part of it bears traces of having been inspired of God. It is worthy of notice that the accounts of the creation and the flood are corroborated by Assyrian and Babylonian traditions, recently discovered, inscribed on clay tablets. These traditions seem to have been handed down from the descendants of Noah. The account of the creation of man in this book is the only one among those which have been found among the sacred books of the nations of the world, which is either probable, rational, or consistent with itself.

### The Creation of the World and of Man.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

PLEASE read this first chapter of Genesis very carefully, and then pay strict attention to what I am going to tell you about it; for unless you give good heed to what is said you cannot well understand what has puzzled a great many wise heads.

In the introductory chapter, you were told that the Bible and the Old Testament was not intended to be a treatise on science, but that whenever any scientific subjects were treated of incidentally, the statements made were, if rightly understood, perfectly in accord with true science. We know that this must be so, because God, who revealed all the matters in these books of the Bible to his servants, is all-wise and cannot make a mistake, while men, who prepare these scientific treatises, though they may think they have discovered all the truth, very often find that they have been in error, all the way through.

There is a science which is called geology; which means, "the science of the earth;" and many men who have studied the rocks and clay and sand and gravel of which the earth is composed, and have named and counted all the layers of these rocks as they were exposed, where large rivers had cut their way through the mountains, or where the rocks had been turned up on edge by an earthquake, have written many books about their discoveries, Some of them believed that all the rocks had at some time been under the influence of terrible heat, and some, that they had been deposited from water. The truth seems to be, that some have been melted and crystallized, and some deposited from water. These geologists think that it must have taken millions of years to form all these layers of rocks; and when they find the bony skeletons of fish in some of the oldest rocks, and the bones of reptiles, like alligators and crocodiles, and other creatures which are not now found alive, in others, and four-footed beasts of kinds not now living in others, they say: "These animals must have lived hundreds of thousands of years ago, and yet this first chapter of Genesis says that all things were made in six days, and Adam on one of the six days, and this was only six thousand years ago. This cannot be true, because the rocks where these fossil animals are found are hundreds of thousands of years old; and if the Bible is not true about this, how can we know that it is true about anything?"

This seemed, at first, to be a very serious objection to this account of the creation, and while the infidels, and people who wanted an excuse for not believing God's word, repeated this objection very triumphantly, a great many good people were much troubled, to know how it should be explained.

There was no need of any anxiety about it. God is able to take care of is word and to prove its truth at all times, and these anxious people should have had more faith. If you will read the first verse of this chapter carefully, you will see that it says, "In the beginning" (but gives us no hint whether that beginning was a million or two million years ago) "God created the heavens and the earth." There is abundance of room here for all the changes which geologists and astronomers ask for. In the second verse we are told: "And the earth was without form and void;" or as the Hebrew words mean, it was all in confusion and chaos; - "and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now let us look at this a little; this could not have been "in the beginning," spoken of in the first verse; for "the earth" had already been created, and there was a "deep" over which the darkness hung, and the waters existed over which the Spirit of God moved. So, then, the earth had been created, we know not how long, and it had evidently passed through one of those great sudden or gradual upheavals, which the study of the rocks shows us were very common in the early history of the earth, when the rocks which were lowest down, i. e., nearest to the centre of the earth, were thrown up by these upheavals, and became the crests of the highest moun-In these changes of the earth's surface, and there must have been many of them, the highest mountains sunk down, and the water rushed in upon them, and they became the bottom of the sea, while what had before been the bottom of the sea became extended plains, or perhaps high mountains,

Now it was not in the beginning of the creation, but long ages after, when this general upheaval, perhaps the last, though there may have been one at the flood, occurred, and the land and water, earth, rocks, stones, mud, ice, the forest trees, and the plants, shrubs, and flowers, and all the animals that were then living on the earth, were mixed up in a terrible confusion, while over the whole brooded a dense steam or fog, from the effect of the volcanic fires upon the waters of the great deep.

As yet, amid all the changes which had taken place on the earth, there had been no men upon it; there had been many huge animals of kinds not now existing; but God saw that the time had come, when man should be created and placed upon it, to subdue and govern the earth. And first, it

was necessary that the earth, which was in such a state of confusion, should be prepared to be the dwelling-place of man. The remainder of this chapter tells us how God fitted the earth to be man's habitation.

## The First Chapter of Genesis, Continued.

ET us next say something about the six days in which God is said to have created the world, or rather to have fitted it to be the habitation of man. We have shown, in the previous chapter, that these six days have nothing to do with the original creation of the earth; for the earth was already in existence before the six days began; but there are many people who say: "I will never believe that all that is described as having been done, in the verses between the 3d and 31st, was accomplished in six days of twenty-four hours each."

Why not? If God could do it at all, he could do it as well in six days, or for that matter, in six hours, as in six hundred or six thousand years. God possesses all power, and can do all things which he wills to do, in a moment of time if he pleases; if he could not, he would not be God.

But there is no necessity for being troubled about this, as I will show you. Man was not created till the close of this period, when the earth was made ready to be his habitation; so much the chapter tells us. Then it follows, that no man could have witnessed these acts of creation or transformation, and, of course, no man could describe them as an eye-witness. How then could it have been described so accurately and vividly, and in so few words? There were two ways in which it might have been done. God could have dictated the exact words of this description to Moses, or whoever of his servants it was, who first wrote it out, so that although they knew nothing of it, they would yet write down the words which God dictated to them; just as if I were to ask you to write down what I dictated to you; and should then describe to you some very beautiful painting which I had seen, and you would write down my words, though you could not understand very perfectly about the picture.

But though, as we have said, God might have done this, it was not his usual way of communicating to men, what he had done, or was about to do. All through the Old Testament, we find that when he revealed to his servants what had already been done, or what was to be done in the future, he did so by means of visions, or as some would say, trances. And it is

altogether probable that the communication of this wonderful event was made in the same way.

You have seen those views of landscapes and buildings which are thrown upon a white surface by means of the magic-lantern, and have noticed how, as one fades away, another takes its place. This will illustrate, though imperfectly, what we mean by a vision or trance. If, as we believe, God adopted this method of showing to his servant the way in which this earth was made fit for the habitation of the human race, which he was about to create, he would most naturally, and with a view to the clearer comprehension of the subject, exhibit the progress of his work, in several successive stages, each of which would be represented in a distinct vision, and as it commenced, progressed and was completed, it would seem to the seer, or person who was in the trance, to complete a day. The original act of creation or transformation may have occupied a day, a month, a year, or a century; its representation in this vision may have been accomplished in five or fifty minutes, yet to the person in the trance it would seem a complete day. We find, then, that nothing can be determined concerning the length, of what some call the creative day, from this narrative.

Let us now attend to the description of each of these visions as they are related in this chapter.

- 1. We have seen that the earth appeared at the commencement of this vision, as in terrible confusion, everything being mingled and jumbled together, while a dense fog threw a pall of darkness over it, and heavy black clouds full of water, above, added to the gloom. Now, in this first vision, God said, "Let there be light," and the light struggled through the clouds and the dense mist and revealed the vast waste of waters and chaos. To the man in the vision it was not yet evident from whence this light, which revealed (dimly, perhaps) the chaos below, proceeded, and as the light had given the appearance of a dull and very cloudy day, it was called by that name, and when the darkness regained its sway, that was named night.
- 2. Again the vision returns, and the light again struggles with the darkness. The seer hears the voice of the Creator saying, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters;" and lo! the dark clouds, which had hung so low, rise into the higher air, the dense mist disappears, and though nor sun nor moon as yet appear, there is more clearly visible, the watery waste. Again the vision is withdrawn, and darkness settles upon the earth.
  - 3. For the third time, the vision reappears, without the mist, and the still

clouded sky giving stronger indications of light, and this time the work of change, reconstruction, and creation goes on more rapidly than before. At the command of God the waters separate from the soil, which they had held in suspense, and rushing down the hills and mountains, and filling up the valleys, are gathered into rivulets, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans. and the dry land appears; as yet without grass, flower, shrub or tree—the observer hears the dry land named "earth," and the gathering of the waters, "seas." Again the command is issued from the high heavens, that this desolate earth shall be clothed with grass, with springing herb, with gay flowers, and fruit-bearing trees, and at once the command seems to be obeyed, and the hills, but now so bare and unseemly, to be clothed with vernal beauty. The work exhibited in this vision could hardly have been accomplished in as brief a time as that of the preceding visions, but there is no definite idea of time in a trance, and so this, at its close, is reckoned but a day.

- 4. The fourth vision opens with the display of the sun in the heavens, the clouds being now dispelled, and the direct rays of the sun being essential to the rapid development of the vegetation, which had sprung into existence in the previous vision; and as the sun sank into the west, the moon and stars in their turn appeared, and the rainless sky of the East, glittering with the gems of the night, closed the fourth vision with radiant beauty.
- 5. The fifth vision witnesses the peopling of the air with birds and flying fowl, and the waters with the finny tribes, in the place of those whom the previous upheavals and convulsions had destroyed, and it concludes with the joyous music of birds, and the disporting of the fish in the waters.
- 6. The sixth vision opens with the repeopling of the land with reptiles and quadrupeds, in place of those destroyed, and closes with the crowning work of all, the creation of man, the master and lord of this world, now resplendent with beauty, and the fit dwelling-place of him who, at his creation was but a little lower than the angels. In its former changes, God had called into existence beast and reptile, bird and fish, and had provided for their wants; but in this new creation, he introduces a new order of beings; man, of loftier intelligence and greater capacity than the beasts, and into him he breathed the breath of life, and man became a living soul; a being knowing right and wrong, capable of doing right or of committing wrong; a being like God in his moral faculties, but not like him in wisdom, power, or perception—an immortal being, whose existence in the future was to be as enduring as that of his Creator.

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With this grand work accomplished the vision ends.

7. Yet once more, the vision opens on a world of wondrous beauty, in its sunshine and shadow, its wide seas, and flowing rivers, its forest-crowned hills, and its fertile valleys, and its animal tribes all peacefully disporting themselves; and, most charming of all, a garden filled with flowers and fruit, with rich perfume and gay with birds of every hue, where the newly created man offers his praises to his Creator. It was the first Sabbath of the new earth, and from the high heavens, the Lord and Creator of all looked down on this scene of blissful quiet and rest, and pronounced it good.

### The Second Chapter of Genesis.

IN this chapter we have a further and more particular account of the creation of the first man and the first woman, and of the beautiful garden of Eden in which God placed them. The book of Genesis was written by Moses, who was inspired by God to write it; but there is some reason to believe that when he wrote, there were some earlier records or traditions, perhaps handed down through Shem, from those who lived before the flood, which God permitted Moses to use in preparing this book. Thus, this second chapter, while it agrees with the first in regard to the creation of Adam and Eve, gives many more particulars about it, and also describes the garden of Eden, its location, and the rivers which flowed from it, the naming of the animals, etc. We may notice, further, that this chapter is unlike the first, in that it is evidently not a vision, or series of visions, but a narrative in the nature of a tradition; and we may reasonably suppose that we have here, in substance, the account of the garden of Eden, the fall of our first parents and their expulsion from paradise, the murder of Abel, and other events as they were handed down by Adam and Eve, and Enoch, or Methuselah, to Shem and to Abraham and Jacob, to Kohath, Amram and Moses. And the truth of these traditions is certified by God himself to his servant, This brings us very near to the time of the creation of man; Moses could have received this tradition through his father, with only seven persons between him and Adam, and he could know that it was all absolutely true. We have the most conclusive proof that we have Moses' story just as he wrote it; and thus we are able to come, in our consciousness, so near to these early times, that we can realize very clearly all of these wonderful and important events. We have thus stated our reasons for believing this book of Genesis to be entirely true, because there are so many who are saying that the account of the creation and the fall of man are all fables. Now, it is not possible that any fable, or made-up story, should have so many and such strong proofs from all quarters that it is true, as this has; and so if we can believe anything that is recorded, we must believe this.

The first three verses of this chapter, which refer to the setting apart of the seventh day as a day of rest, belong properly to the first chapter, and we have already referred to them. The traditional narrative begins with the fourth verse: "These are the generations (or accounts of the creation) of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day (or at the time) that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." In this statement we find several things communicated directly by divine inspiration;—one of these is, that the work of creation was not done by the long-continued operation of the laws controlling matter, but that it was by the putting forth of a God not only made the earth and the heavseries of direct creative acts. ens, but every plant of the field before it was in the earth, etc.; that is, he did not scatter the seed upon the earth, and suffer it to germinate and spring up, but he made the plant perfect, with its seed vessels containing the seeds, so that it could go on at once to perpetuate itself, and was ready at once, for the food of cattle and of man. We find also that when man was created, it was not as a little babe, helpless and requiring tender care, much less as an inferior animal, which, from running on four feet, came to walk on two, and from having only brute instincts, and no immortal nature, came by slow development to be a man, and to have an immortal soul, capable of moral That might have been man's way of creation, but it was not God's way. He created a man in the full vigor of his life, with a well-developed intellect, and a moral nature capable of deciding between right and wrong, and responsible to his Creator for his actions. God does not, in his creative work, leave anything half or imperfectly done. We find in the third place, that it was the LORD God, by whom in the Scriptures we are always to understand the second person in the Trinity, afterward revealed on earth as our Lord Jesus Christ, who performed all these gracious works of creation.

And this is also proved in the eighth chapter of the book of Proverbs, where the Son of God, speaking of himself under the name of Wisdom, says: "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up (or existed) from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." The apostle Paul says, speaking of Christ: "By whom also he (God) made the worlds." If then our blessed Lord, who is our Redeemer and Saviour, was also our Creator, and the Creator of all worlds, how should we love and adore him?

After the LORD God had formed man by a special act of creation, "he planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads (or streams.)"

The description which is given of these rivers would probably enable us to determine where Eden was, if there had not been some change in the course of those rivers, effected either by the flood, or by other causes, since this part of the book of Genesis was written. The probability seems to be that it was in Armenia, and not far from the present Lake Van. The climate was at that time favorable for the perfecting of all descriptions of fruit trees, as well as for those which were remarkable for beauty of foliage or flowers. There were also two other trees, which stood in the midst of the garden—"the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." The early traditions or legends of all the Eastern nations abound in the most glowing descriptions of the luxuriant beauty of this garden in Eden. Every fruit, every flower, every graceful shrub or vine, and every stately

forest tree, we are told, found a home there. The whole air was redolent with the sweetest perfumes; the bird of paradise, and every other bird of the most exquisite plumage, and all the songsters of the groves, flitted among its trees and shrubs, and all the wild beasts, remarkable for grace. beauty and strength, roamed through it, all as yet harmless and playful, In its glassy pools and lakes, the finny tribes leaped into the air, and their glittering scales flashed in the sunlight with myriad hues. Over this garden the LORD God installed the man whom he had created, to dress and to keep it. At this time the man was alone, with no companions except his Creator, who, we are told, assumed even then the human form and walked in the garden in the cool of the day: and the angels of God, who, as they sang their hymns of praise and rejoicing at the dawn of the creation, were ready at all times to visit and cheer this new being, whose form so resembled their own, and in whom they saw only a future addition to their glorious company. That he should have, for a companion, a being of his own nature, was a part of God's plan: and as if to confute in advance the theory of the development of the human race from the inferior orders of animals. we are told that all the beasts and fowls were passed in critical review before Adam, that he might see for himself that none of them could become his equal or companion. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help (or helper) meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed (rather, had formed) every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet (or fit) for him." Then it was that the LORD God again exercised his creative power, not in implanting a soul and higher intellectual powers in some dog, or cat, or ape, or other graceful and beautiful animal of those which Adam's critical eye had seen were not fit companions for him; but he took from Adam's own person a rib and fashioned it, by creative power, into human form, endowed the now animated body with a soul like that of Adam, and an intelligence not inferior to his. The "woman," as Adam named her, was to be thenceforward the complement of man.

From this narrative there are several lessons to be drawn. The first is, that Adam was not, at his creation, the rude untutored savage just developed from an ape, and still farther back from a frog, a shell-fish, or a mo-

nad, as some philosophers of the present day would have us believe. His creation was entirely distinct, both in time and in its processes, from that of the inferior animals. He was endowed with a living, immortal soul from the beginning of his existence; he was entirely different in physical form, structure, and habits of locomotion, and he was, in the beginning, an intelligent, thoughtful being, with not only the faculty of speech, but ideas which formed themselves readily into an extensive vocabulary of words, and reasoning powers which were guided by intuition, perception, judgment, and comparison. The care and dressing of a garden like that in Eden requires no ordinary intelligence; and in giving appropriate names to all the beasts, cattle and birds, and discerning their several characters and natures, and their unfitness to be his companions and equals, there was an amount of intellectual development much greater than we find in many savage tribes at the present day.\*

- 2. In the second place, we find that in this harmonious condition of the physical, intellectual and moral natures of man, he had attained a height of intelligence from which it was possible that he might fall to a lower position; and consequently, that man's history has not been, as some tell us, a constant development and elevation from the first to the present time, but that he has fallen from his first high estate, and that even now, six thousand years since his creation, some branches of the human family have not regained the intelligence and mental capacity which our and their first parents possessed.†
- 3. We learn also what was the position which the LORD God designed that woman should occupy in this world; that she should not be the slave,

<sup>\*</sup>The strongest advocate of the development theory would find it beyond his power to explain how this newly created man came to be at such an infinite distance from the inferior animals in intellect, perception and judgment; how he became so suddenly possessed of moral faculties and a soul; and how his judgment and observation satisfied him that there was no one of the lower orders of animals who was capable of developing into a fit companion for him. Nor could this theorist answer other questions, which press upon him, any more successfully, such as these, for instance—why, in all the ages since the creation of man, no bird, reptile or beast, has made the first step of approach to humanity; or why, if Adam was but a developed ape, the process of development did not go on, and man by this time reach the stature, intellectual capacity and moral worth of an archangel.

<sup>†</sup> The development theory of Mr. Darwin and his followers makes no allowance for any fall or degeneration of the race: its watchword is, "Onward and upward"—a good motto, if the stubborn facts of history, sacred and profane, did not prove so conclusively that large portions of the human race have been constantly degenerating morally, intellectually and physically, from the days of Noah to the present time.

drudge and inferior of man, but his companion and helper, his equal in intellectual capacity, and in moral responsibility; and while possessed of less physical power and a lower stature, making up for this deficiency by the greater intensity of her affectional nature.

4. We see, also, the tender and thoughtful care and love of the Lord God for this first human pair. The other creatures which he had made were, many of them, beautiful, and endowed with a certain measure of intelligence and affection. Over them he extended his general measures of protecting care; but for man he planted the "garden eastward in Eden;" for man he gathered, in that beautiful enclosure, all that could delight the eye, all that could charm the ear, or gratify the senses of taste and smell; for the testing of his moral nature, he set in the midst of the garden that tree the eating of whose forbidden fruit brought woe upon our race; he called his intellectual powers into active exercise, in the duty of deciding upon the fitting names of all the lower orders of animals, and provided with zealous care a suitable companion for him. Would he have manifested such care over a being not destined to immortality?

# The Third Chapter of Genesis.

TATHEN the LORD God had placed the man and woman whom he had created in the beautiful garden in Eden, and had given them dominion over all the animals whose dwelling-place was on the earth, in the air, or in the waters, and had also given into their care the earth, and especially the garden with all its grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees, he asked, in return for all his bounteous gifts, but one thing: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This command was reiterated to the woman, and, as we shall presently see, she had extended the prohibition to the touching of the tree. It had pleased God, in the exercise of his sovereign power in the creation of man, to make him a free agent, capable of choosing to do right or to do wrong; yet without any evil tendency to lead him to do wrong. Man was created perfectly holy and pure; and though he was free to choose either good or evil, any temptation to evil must come from without. Still there must be some command to be obeyed, some restriction, however slight, which should test man's

willingness to acknowledge God's authority. That it should have been so slight a prohibition as this—the abstinence from partaking of the fruit of a single tree, not more desirable than many others of the thousands in the garden—shows the tenderness and mercy of the Lord God. Among all the legends and traditions of the heathen, there is not one in which their gods made so moderate a demand on the beings they had created. In this third chapter, we learn how this slight prohibition came to be disobeyed. here, let us say, that the efforts which are made by so many at the present day to explain away this whole story of the fall of man, as an allegory or fable, are very wrong and wicked. God revealed this to his servants, and inspired them to write it, just as much as he did any other part of the Bible, and if this is an allegory or fable, then the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the translation of Enoch and Elijah, the history of David and Solomon, or any other event of Old Testament record, is equally a fable or an allegory. The legends of eastern nations who have never had the Bible corroborate, if any verification were needed, all the important points of this narrative, which could only have reached them by tradition. The Bible is a golden chain of which every link is equally strong, and each depends upon every other.

Nor is there any reason for doubting the literal truth of any part of this narrative. It introduces to our notice, it is true, a being of a new order, the tempter, whose hostility to the LORD God leads him to attempt the ruin of the newly created pair, whose happiness and purity has roused his envy; and he avails himself of the body of one of the animals of the garden, as the medium for his presentation of the temptation; but there is, surely, no improbability in this: the pages of this sacred book, the whole history of mankind, and our own personal experience, cannot fail to convince us of the existence of, not one alone, but of legions of these evil spirits, who are on the watch for opportunities to lure men on to destruction.

The Bible is full of allusions to the work of these evil spirits, and to their temptations; and their existence is a cardinal doctrine in all the religious of heathendom. Not a few of the heathen nations have gone so far as to offer homage and sacrifices to the evil spirit, to propitiate it, and to prevent the exercise of its malignity against them. The people who almost since the flood have inhabited the regions nearest to the lost Eden, the Aryans or Parsees, have through all their history maintained their belief in two divinities: the spirit of good, and the spirit of evil. Their version of the fall is almost identical with that of the Scriptures. The

Hindoos, who were originally of the Aryan race, also have their deities, who are impersonations of evil and malignity. All the history of the ages, Christian as well as Pagan, enforces the truth of this belief in a personal spirit of evil, who tempts men to sin.

That in this case the arch-fiend, he who in the Scripture is called "the devil, and Satan," "the prince of the power of the air," should himself have undertaken the part of the tempter, only indicates his full perception of the importance of success. But let us follow literally the Scripture narrative: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the And he said unto the woman (whom he seems to LORD God had made. have found alone, and near this 'tree of knowledge of good and evil'), Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did cat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed (or pinned with thorns) fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Let us pause here and consider what this narrative teaches. We find by comparing this with other Scriptures, that it was not the serpent itself, but a powerful, adroit and wicked tempter, who had taken possession of the serpent, and spoke through it to the woman. This tempter, we are told elsewhere, was Satan, a being who had, before the creation of man, been the light-bearer (Lucifer) and chief among the angels of God; but through ambition and envy, had rebelled against God, and had been banished from heaven. His heart was filled with hatred of God, and with malice against the first human pair, from whom, he believed, it was intended to fill the place of the angels, who had joined him in rebellion, and had been cast out of heaven with him. His plan had been carefully wrought out. Taking the form of the serpent or dragon, then probably differing from its present shape, and the most graceful, as it was the most crafty, of all the animals in Eden, and in all probability perched upon a branch of the for-

bidden tree, of whose fruit he made a show of eating, he very carelessly and innocently inquires of the woman, whether it is true, that God had forbidden to them, his professed prime favorites, the fruit which the lower orders of animals were permitted to eat? His possession of the powers of speech, and his partaking of this fruit freely, his crafty suggestion of doubt whether this could be true, and his apparent artlessness, threw the woman off her guard, and she replies with perhaps unconscious exaggeration, and with apparently a little feeling of discontent, that they are allowed to partake of the other fruits, but that in regard to this particular tree, God had not only forbidden them to eat of its fruit, but to touch it, lest they die.

The tempter has accomplished his first purpose; he has excited in her a feeling of distrust of God's love and mercy for her. Here was a beast evidently her inferior, yet capable of talking and reasoning, who was allowed to do what she was forbidden: could it be that God loved this beast more than her? or was he arbitrary and unjust in his prohibitions, and desirous of depriving her of pleasures which she might enjoy? There were no promptings of a sinful nature to second these temptations, for her heart was pure, but the tempter, by his first question, had implanted a germ of sin in that pure soul; and he proceeds to cultivate that germ, by a bold denial of the truth and honor of God, and to inspire her with the belief that he, the Almighty, was actuated by jealousy, lest the creatures he had made should become his equals in knowledge and power. Weak and silly as was this temptation, the woman was unable to detect its fallacy, and under the fascinating gaze of the tempter, with her eyes dazzled by the beauty of the fruit, which he offered her, her appetite roused, and her ambition excited to become as wise as the God whom she knew, she had really committed the sin which ruined all her progeny in her heart, ere she stretched forth her trembling hand, and, with eager haste, plucked the fair fruit from the tree. Having consummated her own offence against God, by eating the forbidden fruit, she turns temptress and easily persuades her husband to partake in her sin. Both had thus defied the thrice repeated command of the LORD God, and though, but an hour ago, as pure as the angels, they were now in open rebellion against him.

And now these poor souls, who, at the apparent prompting of this beast of the field, had forfeited, so weakly and wantonly, the loving favor of the LORD God, found that a part of what Satan had told them was true, but in quite another sense than they had understood it; for Satan often mixes a little truth with his falsehoods, to induce people to receive them more

readily. He had told them that they should be as gods, knowing good and evil. They were not much like gods, as they stood there shivering and hiding even from each other, in the first consciousness of their nakedness, their loss of purity, and their defilement of guilt; but they did know more of good and evil, than they did an hour before; they knew what was good and pure, by their consciousness of having lost it, and they knew what evil was, by their sense of guilt and fear of God's displeasure.

The first use they made of their knowledge was to make themselves a rude and imperfect covering, from the great leaves of the banyan fig; the second to hide themselves from the sight of their Creator, in the darkest gloom of the trees of the garden.

Vain was their attempt at concealment, and equally vain their effort to hide, under their fig-leaf covering, their loss of purity and innocence. When the voice of the Lord God is heard in the garden, in the cool of the day, calling to Adam, "Where art thou?" the guilty pair emerge trembling from the shady depths, and attempt to excuse their delay and their new attire, but the voice of the Creator sternly demands: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

In the reply of both the man and woman to the searching questions of the LORD God, we see new proof of the rapid development of the sinful nature. Adam, who but yesterday was cherishing his companion with the fondest affection, as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, now answers the stern inquiry with, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," as if he would lay the blame of his sin on the LORD God, for giving him a companion, of whom he speaks thus reproachfully; while the woman, in turn, lays the blame of her ruin upon the serpent, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The poor serpent, dumb now that the tempter has gone, can make no excuse; and hears, no doubt with anguish, the sentence of degradation, which strikes with terrible significance through it to the fallen spirit, who had made it his organ for so foul a crime; while this sentence also contains a gleam of hope for the guilty pair, who yet stand awaiting their doom from the Creator, whose wrath they had so lately defied. Upon each in turn falls the weight of his displeasure; upon the woman, in the sorrows and pangs of maternity, and in the, not always kindly, rule of her husband over her; and upon the man. as really, though latest, yet also the greatest offender, the solemn decree. which for these six thousand years has been the dirge of all the tribes of

men: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Yet was this judgment mingled with mercy. Honest toil should still bring bread, and though they might no longer dwell amid the luxury of the beautiful garden, with its luscious fruits, they might, by persistent labor, make to themselves garden homes which should remind them of the lost Eden; and by faith in the future sacrifice for sin, typified by the lambs slain, even at this time in token of atonement, and with whose skins they were clad, they might attain to a still more glorious paradise.

#### The First Murder.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

EVENTS soon proved that this great sin of disobedience to God, which our first parents had committed in eating of the forbidden fruit, had not only rendered them mortal, and subjected them to great suffering and severe toil, but that it had poisoned their blood and infected their whole nature; and that all their descendants would feel the sad effects of their sin, not only in being liable to death, but in being more ready to yield to temptation to sin, and having a natural drawing toward sin, which Adam did not have, when he was first placed in the garden of Eden.

We are to learn from this sad story, what a wicked thing sin is; how it corrupts the whole nature, and if not resisted at the very beginning, makes a man ready and willing to do any wicked act. From the time that Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, to the present hour, all their descendants, except the Lord Jesus Christ, have had this tendency to sin; some of them have resisted it, and through strength given them from above, have been able to become pure and holy; but the greater number of those who have lived to grow up, have yielded to the tendency and have become very sinful, committing, in many cases, great crimes such as this, related in this chapter. For both classes, the only way of redemption from sin, and the tendency to sin, has been through faith in the sacrifice wrought out by the world's Redeemer.

After Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden, and had begun to till the ground, they had several children, sons and daughters. When the first son was born, Eve was much delighted, for she thought that he would prove to be the Lord—the Saviour, who it had been promised should bruise the head of the serpent—the tempter. In her joy she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or rather, "I have gotten the man, the Lord—the promised seed." Poor Eve was mistaken in this joyful anticipation. The Lord, or Saviour for whom she looked, was not to come in human form for four thousand years, and this son, whom, from her hopefulness, she named Cain—possession, was to prove to her, and to his father, the source of terrible sorrow, and to remind them of their great sin against God. In due season another son came, and Eve, less hopeful, named him Abel,—vanity. Daughters were also born, whose names are not given.

As the two sons grew up they manifested different dispositions and tastes. Adam's employment was "to till the ground out of which he was taken"that is, he was to be a farmer or husbandman. Out of this occupation came, by a subsequent subdivision of labor, two distinct pursuits. He who would till any considerable portion of the ground, must have something beside his own unassisted powers to break up the soil, or to gather the grains, seeds As yet iron and copper were not; the only tools of the farmer were the hardened and sharpened stick which was used as a plough, spade and hoe, or the sharp-edged stone with which by infinite labor the ground and sod might be broken up. By some rude harness, the buffalo, or the cow of the Syrian bull, might be taught to draw this sharpened stick over the surface and so scratch up the soil for planting seed. The sheep and goats were domesticated without much difficulty, and their skins formed the clothing of the time. There is some reason to believe that flesh was not eaten till after the flood. The two pursuits of the patriarchal farmer, then, were the direct cultivation of the soil, and the rearing of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats; the subjugation of the horse and the ass seems to have occurred at a later period. The two sons of Adam divided these two pursuits between them, in accordance with their natural tastes. Cain, the elder, frugged and stalwart, broke up the soil, gathered and burned the thorny shrubs, the nettles and thistles, which cumbered the ground, sowed the grain, reaped the harvest, gathered the fruits, and provided from these sources subsistence for the household. All this was praiseworthy, and met with God's approval. Abel, the younger and possibly equally vigorous brother, for his part, collected his fast increasing flocks of sheep and goats, gathered the as yet hardly domesticated kine, and possibly subdued for his use the camel or the ass. In these pursuits he also received the divine approbation.

So far there is nothing to indicate that one brother was better than the other. For aught we know, both were obedient to their parents, and kind and tender to their sisters. Both were probably industrious, and perhaps equally intelligent and thoughtful.

It is only when we are called to look at their religious life, that we see the difference between them.

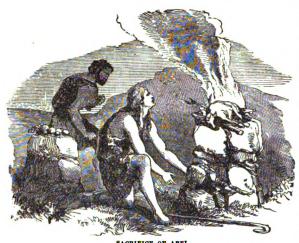
The rude altar of unhewn stone, probably not far off from the barred gate of Eden, must have often smoked with the sacrifices of lambs and kids and perhaps of kine, since that sad day when, expelled from Eden, the first pair had learned from the LORD God, the necessity of a sacrifice for sin, which should typify the great sacrifice to be offered on Calvary, and had also been assured, that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins. Of these solemn sacrifices, the only means which Adam and Eve as yet had of communication with the infinite Creator, both Cain and Abel must have been frequent witnesses, and possibly participants. But as they grew up, Cain ceased to have faith in a coming Deliverer; he perhaps saw no necessity for any deliverer; confident in his own strength and prowess, and believing himself capable of protecting his own life, and the lives of his family, he recognized no need of a Saviour from sin, as he was not conscious of its deadly character. He was willing to acknowledge by an offering of fruits and grains, that God had sent to the earth fruitful seasons, and an abundant crop; but he did not believe that his nature was sinful nor that there was a necessity for a sacrifice of blood for the remission of sins. "Why," he argued, "should God require the life of an innocent lamb or heifer, as an appropriate sacrifice to him? It is folly to believe in any such necessity."

Abel had not his brother's proud and haughty disposition. The story of the lost Eden, and of the sin which had brought such woe upon them all, had deeply impressed him; and he recognized in the appointed sacrifice for in, the future sacrifice and atonement to be wrought out by the world's Redeemer. To him, there was a precious and comforting truth hidden in the assurance that, "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission."

So, when the day for sacrifice came, the two brothers reared their rude stone altars, and Cain laid upon his a sheaf of his gathered grain, and the ripened peach, pomegranate, olive, and grape; while Abel, with bowed head

and humble reverence as confessing his sinfulness, and asking for atonement and pardon, brought the flesh and fat of the firstlings of his flock, and laid them upon the altar, beside which he had poured out their blood.

Cain stood erect by his altar awaiting recognition from him whom he considered as but his equal, or at the most as entitled to but a qualified



SACRIFICE OF ABEL

homage. Soon the fire from heaven came down on Abel's sacrifice, and consumed it, but no consuming flame, no indication of recognition or acceptance, descended upon Cain's altar, and fruit and grain remained alike untouched. At this evidence of the preference of God for his brother's offering, all the jealousy of Cain's nature blazed out. He was very angry, and his counte-

nance was gloomy and sullen. He hated his brother, because the sacrifice which Abel had offered had been accepted, and his own rejected; and he hated God, because he had thus preferred his brother's sacrifice.

But the LORD God, the Redeemer of men, is gracious and long-suffering, and he condescended to reason with this angry and sinful man. Whether on this, as on other occasions, he assumed the human form, we know not; but he said to Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?" Still sullen, Cain makes no answer, and the LORD God proceeds: "If thou doest well (that is, if thou recognizest thy sinfulness, and thy need of a Saviour, by an appropriate sacrifice) shalt thou not be accepted? (shalt thou not find favor with me?) If thou persistest in denying thy need of a Saviour, the very sinful nature, which thou wilt not acknowledge, lies crouching at the door of thy heart, ready to spring upon thee and control thee. But do thou master this sinful disposition."

But Cain preferred to let sin control him. He told his brother Abel, in a defiant spirit, what the LORD God had said to him; and then, his rage increasing with his words, he sprang upon his brother and killed him. The tempter had increased in boldness in this his second act of defiance of God, in connection with the human family. When our first parents had sinned in the garden, and the Lord God called them to account, they at once confessed their sin, though with such attempts at palliations as they could offer; but Cain, when the Lord asks, "Where is Abel, thy brother?"

answers, evidently under the prompting of the tempter, with a scornful tone, and a falsehood so stupendous, that the father of lies must have dictated it: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?"

For such a rebel against the divine compassion there could be no mercy. Terrible is the sentence pronounced against him by this hitherto gracious God. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth



DEATH OF ABEL.

unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." Still unrepentant, yet afraid lest the death he had inflicted upon his brother should befall him, from some of his own family, Cain complains, in an injured tone, that his punishment is greater than he can bear. But God ordains that his life shall be prolonged, while he makes that very prolongation an added punishment.

Thus burdened with the curse of God, branded by the hand of the Almighty, Cain went out from the vicinity of Eden, from the home which his crime had made desolate, taking with him his sister-wife and plunging into the wilderness beyond the Tigris, probably in what is now Persia. Here a son was born to him, and he built a small fort or walled town, possibly for defence against apprehended foes; this fort he named, as he did his son, Enoch or Henoch, which is said to mean "the devoted" or "initiated." As this was the first attempt at building a town of which there is any record, the name may have indicated that Cain desired his son to be regarded as the founder or initiated head of a future nation.

The descendants of this wretched man increased somewhat rapidly in numbers, the men developing wonderful inventive skill and genius for all

kinds of business, and the women possessing extraordinary beauty. But both sexes were as remarkable for their wickedness, as for their intellectual endowments or personal comeliness. The song of one of the worst of them, Lamech, of the fifth generation from Cain, is recorded in this chapter, and its tone is that of a proud, boastful ruffian, ready for any deed of violence, and basing his hope of immunity from punishment on the magnitude of his crimes. It is worthy of notice that to this Cainitish race the world is indebted for the rude smelting of iron and copper, and probably for weapons made from these metals; for the introduction of musical instruments, perhaps the Pandean pipe of reeds, or the earlier forms of the lyre or harp; and for the domestication of cattle, and the production of tents, perhaps of coarse cloth.

But while the descendants of Cain were thus increasing in numbers and wickedness, God did not leave himself without a witness. After the death of Abel, Adam had yet other children, and his son Seth, whom Eve regarded as sent to her in the place of the slain Abel, became a good and holy man. From him descended a long list of good men who obeyed God and preserved the knowledge of his commands and promises. It was at this time that men first commenced to express their petitions to God in prayer.

### The Descendants of Seth.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

In this chapter we have new evidence of the design of God in revealing his will to man, in the Old Testament. The descendants of Seth are the godly line from whom, through Noah, and Shem and Abraham, through Jacob and Judah and David, the Christ, the Anointed Saviour and Redeemer should come, and it was important that every step of this descent or genealogy should be distinctly marked. In the fourth chapter we have the names of some of the descendants of Cain, but not all, and no account is given of their ages or the duration of their lives. This was not a matter of any importance, since for their wickedness they were all to be swept away by the flood, and their memory to be blotted out forever.

But when we come to the godly race, through whom the world was again to be peopled, the narrative is much more minute and particular. In every instance the age of the father, when the son, who was to form one of the members of the patriarchal line, was born, is given, although this was not always the eldest son; and the period which elapsed between the birth of this son and the death of the father, is also given. Most of these patriarchs had large families and lived to a great age—Adam dying at the age of nine hundred and thirty years, and probably seeing nine generations of his descendants of the line of Seth; Seth living to the age of nine hundred and twelve years; Enos to nine hundred and five; Cainan to nine hundred and ten; Mahalaleel to eight hundred and ninety-five; Jared to nine hundred and sixty-two; Enoch, of whom we have more to say presently, only to three hundred and sixty-five; Methuselah to nine hundred and sixty-nine; Lamech to seven hundred and seventy-seven; while Noah, who survived the flood three hundred and fifty years, reached the age of nine hundred and fifty.

There is no reason to suppose that any of these patriarchs whose names are given were wicked men, but many of their sons, brothers, and nephews probably were. One great cause of this wickedness was, that many of the sons of these godly men were attracted by the remarkable beauty of the women of the Cainite race, who lived at no great distance from them, and they married into that race, and so were led away into sin; for these women were as wicked as they were fair. The tide of corruption spread far and wide, and ere long, as these venerable worshippers of Jehovah died, one after another, there was left but a single household who maintained their faith in a coming Redeemer. All the rest, and they must have numbered many thousands in the more than sixteen hundred years since the creation of Adam and Eve, had "gone in the way of Cain," disobeying and defying God, and letting sin reign in and rule over their hearts and lives.

But among the patriarchs whom we have named, some were eminently good men. One of these, Enoch, was so remarkable for his piety that we are twice told that he walked with God—for three hundred years—"and he was not, for God took him." His life was so holy and pure, and his intercourse with Jehovah so intimate and confiding, that God took him to heaven without the pangs of death, that he might be forever with the LORD, where his righteous soul might not be tired and distressed by the evil words and sinful deeds of the wicked men around him, whom he had so earnestly rebuked. His life on earth was only three hundred and sixty-five years, less than half of that of any of the other patriarchs, and he was translated to heaven more than fifty years before the death of Seth. But

this life in the home above, has been longer than that of any of the other patriarchs except Adam and Abel.

One of the sons of Enoch—the only one of whom we know anything—Methuselah, lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years old, older than any other man that ever lived on the earth; and died the very year that the flood commenced. The grandson of Enoch, Lamech, seems to have been also a good man, and to have looked forward with hope to a coming Redeemer, though he made the mistake of believing that his son Noah was to be that promised Redeemer.\* Noah, the son of Lamech, and great-grandson of Enoch, was a man of strong faith, and of a pure and holy life. Under the direction of God he was to become the ancestor of a new race, after all the sinners of the races then existing should have been swept away by the judgment of God.

We may learn from this record of the patriarchs, that while long life is often a blessing, especially if it is accompanied with great usefulness, and while one of the judgments pronounced upon the wicked is, that they shall not live out half their days; yet it is a far greater blessing, to live a life sc holy and pure as "to walk with God," as Enoch did. To those who are thus blessed, it matters little whether their life in this world is long or short, for if God takes them to himself, their eternal happiness is secure.

### The Flood and Noah's Life.

THE SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND NINTH CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

THE intermarriage and intermingling of the two races, the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth, led speedily to a great corruption of morals, and to the almost universal prevalence of the grossest wickedness. This was inevitable; for, in consequence of the sin of our first parents, all their descendants were born with a tendency to sin; a disposition to yield to temptation, which, even with the strictest watchfulness and the strongest resistance to the tempter, made life a succession of struggles and self-denials, in which only those who trusted in the power and grace of the coming Redeemer could hope to come off victors. How, then, could these descendants of Seth, who flung aside all the barriers which restrained them from lives of sinful disobedience to God, and rushed into alliances with the Cainites, who openly defied God, and gloried in the boldest acts of iniquity, be ex-

pected to become otherwise than corrupt and vile? The sixth chapter tells us what was the result. "And it came to pass, when men (that is, the Cainite race of men) began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God (i. e., the men of the Sethite race, who were brought up in the fear of God) saw the daughters of men (the Cainite women) that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. . . . There were giants (rather, men of violence) in the earth in those days (these were probably such men as the Cainite Lamech and Tubal-Cain); and also after that, when the sons of God married the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown. And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy (or wipe off) man whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

How fearful must have been the corruption and wickedness of men, when the gracious and long-suffering God, who had borne so patiently with them, should be so wearied with their depravity, as to at last determine to destroy them, as unfit to exist longer upon his earth; and to include in this destruction even the brute animals, who, as having been the unconscious partakers in their crimes and wickedness, were also to participate in their punishment.

Yet, abhorrent as was their wickedness to Jehovah, he was not disposed to send his judgments upon them, without giving them an opportunity to repent. He sent his warnings to them a hundred and twenty years before the flood, and Noah was commissioned to preach unto them the necessity of repentance, and the Redeemer who was to come. Noah was directed by God to prepare an ark, an immense ship—which was intended to float on the waters of the flood. The dimensions and details of the construction of the ark were given him by revelation from God, and he was required to make provision of room and food, in it, not only for his own family, but for single pairs of all the animals then known to man; and for seven pairs of all clean beasts and fowls, that is, of those which were suitable either for food or sacrifice.

Noah showed his perfect faith in God, by making all these preparations through many years, but though he preached so earnestly the necessity of repentance during the whole period of a hundred and twenty years, there

is no record that any were led to repentance. It is barely possible that some of those who died in that hundred and twenty years may have believed on the coming Saviour. We have reason to believe that Lamech, and Methuselah, the father and grandfather of Noah, both of whom died just before the beginning of the flood, were good and holy men, and there may have been others, like them, who died before the destruction came; but when the day came for Noah and his family to enter the ark, there was not another person, of all the thousands who were living, who was saved from the de-

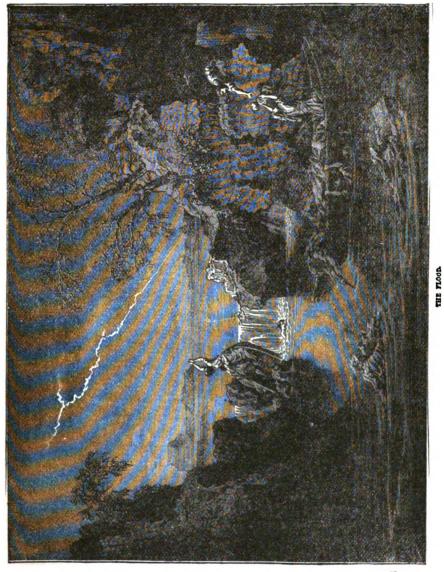


NOAH'S ARK.

struction of that terrible day. At last the period of probation was ended; the hundred and twenty years were completed, and the judgments of God were to fall upon these wicked people. The ark was completed, and all the necessary provision was made for the suste nance of its living cargo. Seven days before the flood came, Jehovah declared to Noah its immediate coming, and provided for the entrance into the ark of all the animals who were thus to be saved. When these were all in their places, Noah and his family followed, being in all eight persons, viz., Noah and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, with their

wives; and Jehovah shut them in.

On the same day, which is supposed to have been in the early part of November, a storm commenced such as the inhabitants of the world had never seen, and such as has never since been witnessed on our globe; and there were united with it some great convulsions of nature, such as earth-quakes, and perhaps eruptions of volcanoes. The Bible account of it is, that on "the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights;"... "and the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills (or



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mountains) that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail: and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

Let us notice several things which are suggested by a careful study of The words of the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter imply this passage. some great convulsion of nature, which by God's ordaining occurred at this time, in connection with the terrible and long-continued storm. men are divided in opinion as to what this convulsion was. Some of them think that the island or continent of Australia or New Holland, which is acknowledged to be the portion of the globe which was the latest to rise from the sea, was thrown up at this time, and that its upheaval threw a vast wave of the Indian Ocean over Asia, which was slow in subsiding. Others think that the Caspian Sea, which may have been very deep originally, and connected with the ocean by way of the Persian Gulf, or the Black Sea. which may have been much larger than now, became much shallower by the upheaval of the earth which formed its bed, and thus threw a vast body of water over this region. Either of these causes in connection with the continued rain was sufficient to have produced the flood.

It is not necessary to suppose that all parts of the globe were alike overwhelmed by this flood. Its primary purpose was to destroy the whole human race except Noah and his family; but these, though probably numbering many thousands, could not, with the most liberal estimate, have extended their settlements beyond the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea at the northeast, the Persian Gulf and northern Arabia at the south, the Mediterranean, the Bosphorus and the Black Sea at the west and north. The probability is very strong that they did not occupy one-half of this territory. A flood which would submerge the highest mountains of this district to the depth of twenty-one feet, even on the supposition that the mountains were as high then as they now are, would not necessarily submerge eastern Asia or much of Europe. All the human beings were destroyed except Noah's family, but the animals destroyed were only those of this region; and it has been

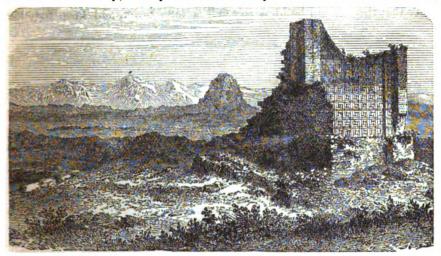
proved by Mr. Wallace in his "Geographical Distribution of Animals," that inasmuch as very few animals inhabit all parts of the earth, and there are in different countries animals which, though resembling each other somewhat, are yet of distinct species, and sometimes of distinct genera or families—there must have been many distinct centres of creation for the lower animals. We need not therefore regard the destruction of animals as having been so nearly universal as that of man. While there are undoubted marks of the changes produced by this flood in Armenia and Trans-Caucasia, and perhaps also in Persia and Asia Minor, the most eminent geologists do not find any such evidences of it in western Europe, or so far as they have explored in Africa, Australia, or in any part of this great western continent. There are traditions of it, though dim ones, among some of the older European nations, and the Indian tribes of this continent; but these only prove that they, like ourselves, are descendants of Noah.

The ark, with its precious freight—for it carried all that remained of the human family—after a period of about four months of floating, five months after Noah and his family entered it, rested upon the mountains of Ararat, supposed to be in southern Armenia, near the borders of Persia. It was more than ten weeks after this, however, before the tops of the lower mountains were seen. Eight weeks later the dove, thrice sent forth, found a resting-place outside of the ark, and a few days after, on removing the upper covering of the ark, Noah found that the waters were completely drained off; but he awaited the divine command, which did not come until he had spent a year and ten days in the ark; and when he at last came out with his family, he brought out, also, all the animals and birds which had been his fellow-occupants of the ark.

For this great deliverance from the wreck of the old world, and his emergence into a new one which was to be peopled by his family, Noah was very grateful, and erecting an altar unto the Lord, as his fathers had done, he sacrificed thereupon one of every clean beast and fowl or bird, which had come out of the ark, as a burnt-offering. You will remember that there were seven pairs of each of these clean beasts and fowls in the ark.

This sacrifice was pleasing to Jehovah—it indicated the penitence and the faith of this father of the new race; and, though God knew infinitely better than Noah could know, the weakness and fallibility of man's nature, his proneness to sin, and the gross vices into which many of the race would fall, yet he was moved with compassion for their errors and sins, and proclaimed his determination not to destroy the race of men again by a flood.

In the ninth chapter we have an account of God's covenant with Noah and his family; the blessings he conferred upon them, the permission to use the flesh of animals and fowls as food, but the prohibition of the use of blood. At this time, too, was given that solemn denunciation of murder, and that penalty—a life for a life—which was to be exacted upon the murderer, and which has in all ages been the foundation of the law of the death penalty. And this long interview of Jehovah, the God of the covenant, with Noah and his family, in which he seems to have appeared in human form, was terminated by that most beautiful seal and sign of the covenant, the rainbow, or the bow in the cloud, specially declared to be its sign by Jehovah himself. The chapter ends with a piteous story, which shows us that even the best of men may, if they do not constantly maintain their watchfulness,



KOAH'S TOMB IN ARMENIA

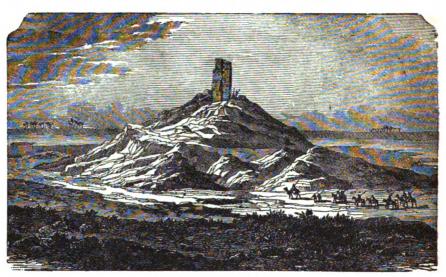
fall into sin. Noah became a husbandman, and planted a vineyard, and when the grapes were ripe, made wine, and in partaking of it became intoxicated, and while in a drunken sleep or stupor, disrobed himself, and was seen in this unseemly condition, by his grandson, Canaan, the son of Ham. Both Ham and Canaan seem to have ridiculed their father's condition, but Shem and Japheth, with filial reverence, tenderly covered him. The patriarch, after recovering from his stupor, was inspired to pronounce prophetic blessings on his two elder sons, and to predict the evils which should come upon Canaan for the gross wickedness of his descendants.

Noah survived the flood for three hundred and fifty years, living till two years before the birth of Abraham.

## The Building of Babel, and Beginning of many Languages.

GENESIS XI. 1-9.

FOR more than eighteen hundred years there was only one language known in the world. What this language was we do not know; probably it was not any which is now spoken. At this time, about a hundred and fifty years after the flood, men had increased so much, that God saw that it was best that they should go abroad and people other parts of the earth, as, when they were congregated together in large towns, they became more wicked. But a prominent chief named Nimrod, who had been a successful hunter of wild beasts, persuaded his followers that it was better that they should build a city and a lofty tower, and keep together,



BIRS-NIMROUD, THE ANCIENT BABEL.

and make him their king. So they began a tower, which was the most wonderful thing that ever was seen. It was half a mile round it, and half a quarter of a mile high! The shape was square, like many church towers, which, however, are as small, compared with it, as a post compared with them. There was a walk to ascend by degrees round and round it, so broad that horses and carriages might pass each other and turn round. This tower was built of brick, cemented together with a kind of hard pitch, instead of mortar.

It was against God's will that men should all live together, instead of spreading over the earth; so God said, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

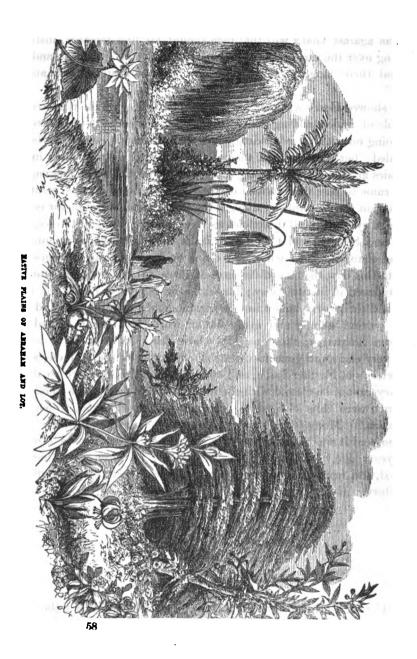
This showed God's wisdom; for this simple device, which rendered them incapable of understanding each other, not only effectually prevented them from going on with their building, since their demands could not be comprehended; but it also caused them to go away to distant lands in small companies at first, including only those who spoke the same language, and thus it came to pass that, instead of their settling down on this great plain of Shinar, in the Euphrates valley, as they were disposed to do, for centuries to come, they went in all directions, to Egypt, and Syria, and Greece, and to Persia, and Scythia, and China and India, and those whose language was the most changed went farthest. We find evidence in the languages of the world to this day, that the differences of these various tongues must have been produced in just this way; for while the languages of all the nations which had their early homes in this region about the Euphrates and Tigris have a general affinity and many similar words, and so are called Indo-European languages; those nations whose founders must have left that region very early and gone to distant lands, such as the Chinese, and the early settlers of Farther India, and of Egypt and Ethiopia, are so different that they cannot be classed with the others. The tower which these ambitious men were thus obliged to abandon was called Babel, which means "confusion." Many years later, it became the central point of the city of Babylon, and it was reduced to a ruin, though still of immense size, about 2,500 years ago. Within a few years past it has been very thoroughly explored, and many things have been discovered there which confirm the Bible story.

#### Abram.

#### GENESIS XII. 1-3.

You read a great deal about Abram in the Bible. His father's name was Terah, and his family was of the race that sprung from Shem, one of the sons of Noah.

Abram lived in a place called Ur, in the country of the Chaldeans; but



the people were wicked, so God "said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thees and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

How God spoke to Abram we cannot tell; but we know that God can do all things, and he who made the world could very easily make any one in the world to know what he wished him to do. He now speaks to us in his word; but then he often spoke to good men in dreams, and by other like means, and he might so speak to Abram.

Abram obeyed what God said to him. He left his country, and he took with him those that would go of his family—his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot. "And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

This was a country then full of wicked men; but Abram did not go to live amongst them as he did in his native country. "The Canaanite was then in the land." The Canaanites displeased God very much by their sins, and their land was in time to be taken from them because of their sins, and then Abram's family would have it; and they would know what a mercy it was to have so good a father, whom God had blessed and made a blessing to them.

As soon as Abram entered Canaan, "there was a famine," or want of food in the land. The crops of corn and fruit had failed, and people were starving. This must have made Abram think whether he had done right or not in leaving his country, and whether God would really bless him as he had said. But Abram had great faith: he was sure that all God says is right and true. So Abram would not go back; and he went for a time into the next country, which was Egypt, where there was corn.

## Lot.

#### Genesis XIII. 5-13.

THE riches of people in those days were mostly in cattle, of which they had great numbers. "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold."—"And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and

herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them" (that is, it was not large enough just in that part), "that they might dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle."

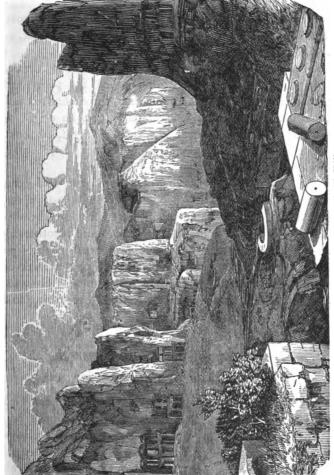
In that country, water was not always to be found, as it is here, and wells were dug with great pains, to find water. To those wells the cattle were driven, and water was drawn and given them to drink. If two parties came to a well at the same time, they often quarrelled who should get the water first, or who only should have it. This was most likely the case with Lot's and Abram's servants: but they were wrong to quarrel, and by so doing they made Lot and Abram leave one another, when they might still have lived together in love and peace; for the land would have been large enough if they had been kind to each other. "Bad servants often make a great deal of mischief in families, by their pride and passion, their lying, slandering, and tale-bearing." Perhaps some of those who read this may be in the employ of others. If so, let them profit by this story of the servants of Abram and Lot, and learn the folly and wickedness of quarrelling with others, and of speaking evil of those who employ them.

And now Abram showed how good a man he was. As Lot and he must part, he gave Lot his choice. He was willing to do anything for the sake of peace: and he told him, if he would go to the country on the left hand, then he would go to the right; or if he went to the right hand, then he would go to the left

## Battle of the Kings, and Lot taken Prisoner.

GENERIS XIV. 8-12.

WE have here an account of the first war that we read of in Scripture. Chedorlaomer was king of Persia, which was in old times called Elam. He was not content with what he had, but had probably beaten five other kings not so strong as he, and had made them pay him some money and goods every year, to keep their crowns. After he had done so for twelve years, they thought they were strong enough to beat him, and so they would pay the money and goods no longer. The king of Elam, or Persia, did not like to lose their tribute, or what they paid him; so he asked the king of Shinar, or Chaldea, and two other kings, to join him, and go and help him to subdue these people. They met in a plain, or large piece of flat ground, and there they fought. The king of Elam, or



VALLEY OF SALP, BETWEEN CANAAN AND EDOM.

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Persia, conquered, or beat them, and they all ran away. Among those that were beaten was the king of Sodom, and his city was entered, and all that was worth having was taken away; and Lot, having gone to live there, lost all that he had, and was carried off to be made a slave of with all his family.

A wretched condition poor Lot was in now! This came from choosing to go and live among people that did not fear God, and that, as we shall soon learn, were noted for being wicked.

One of the people of Sodom escaped, and made haste to Abram, and told him what had become of Lot. Abram pitied his poor nephew, and resolved to save him. So he took all his men, three hundred and eighteen in number, and divided them into several parts, that he might come upon the enemy on all sides; and overtaking them at night, he took them by surprise, defeated and routed them, and brought back Lot, "and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

And now the king of Sodom, hearing of what Abram had done, went to see if he could get back any of his people. You will see in the chapter, that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell into the slime pits, or pits full of a kind of black mud, and probably were smothered there; so that this was either a new king of Sodom, or it was only his people that fell into pits, and he escaped. Abram very kindly gave back all he had taken, and would receive nothing for what he had done. He was too good a man to wish to get rich by war; and he restored everything to the lawful owners.

# The Burning of Sodom and Gomorrah.

GENESIS XIX. 24, 25.

ODOM was now become so very wicked a place, that God said he would destroy it at once, and he told Abraham what he meant to do. Now, Abraham did not know it was so very wicked a place as it was; and as we should always think as kindly as we can of everybody, Abraham hoped there might be some good people there besides Lot, for whose sake God would spare the wicked cities. In the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, and at the twenty-third and following verses, we have a very fine prayer which Abraham prayed to God, to try and save Sodom and Gomorrah; for we have said that Abraham was a good man, and good men always pray. He said, "Peradventure (or if) there be fifty righteous in the city; wilt

thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."



SUPPOSED SITE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

See how God loves good people; so much, that if there had only been afty in Sodom and Gomorrah, he would have spared all the wicked for their sakes. And see what blessings we may hope for, if we live among truly good people, who love and fear God.

But Abraham was afraid that there might not be fifty, for he no doubt knew that the cities were very wicked; and he therefore prayed God to save Sodom, if the number of good people should be less than fifty, till at last he left off at ten; and the Lord said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

Some angels had appeared to Abraham, and talked with him on this subject. An angel means a messenger, or a person that carries a message. Angels are often spoken of in Scripture, for in those days God made known his mind to men by sending angels. These are spirits that serve God in heaven, and they often by his power put on the shape of men, and so talked with them.

Now two angels were sent to visit Sodom and Gomorrah, and to destroy them for their sins. In those days there was much hospitality. Lot was sitting out of doors, enjoying the air, as they do in hot countries; and as he was at the gate or entrance of the city, he saw two men that looked like travellers, and he bowed to them to show them respect, and kindly asked them into his house, and begged them to stop all night and to wash their feet, and then they could go on comfortably in the morning.

In some of the hot countries the people do not wear shoes, but what are called sandals, or soles with straps to them, that go over the top of the foot to keep them on. These were used by people at that time, and after a journey it was very comfortable to wash the feet to make them clean and cool. This will explain the reason why Lot asked the travellers to wash their feet.

The travellers now went in with Lot, and he made them a feast, and his food was very plain, according to the custom of those times; all they had was a little unleavened bread, or bread made without yeast, which ours is made with that it may be light.

But the angels found that the people of Sodom were very wicked, and they warned Lot to take his family and escape before God destroyed them. Lot had a wife, and two daughters, at home; there were also married daughters, but their husbands would not believe Lot's warning, and he was obliged to leave them and their husbands behind; if they had been good people, they would not have perished with such a punishment. And in the morning the angels led him away, for he lingered, perhaps in hopes of seeing his other children coming, and they said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." But Lot begged that he might go to Zoar, a little city close by; and for his sake that city was saved.

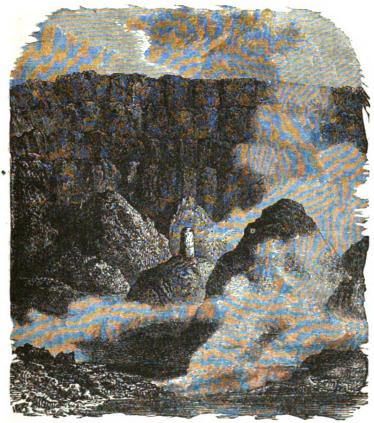
And now the storm began. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

Some persons, who wrote a long while ago, tell us there were thirteen cities in the plain of Sodom, and that Sodom was the capital, or largest, as London is of England. These all perished but Zoar, where Lot was.

God caused fire to fall upon them, and it fell upon ground, which, being pitchy, soon caught fire; and all those wicked people, and their houses, and

goods, and lands were all burnt, and the cities were turned into a lake, or very large body of water. This lake, now called the Dead Sea, is as much as thirty miles long and ten miles broad. Its waters look clear, but the bottom is black, and smells nasty. No fish can live there, and no herbs can grow near it. Sulphur in quantities is found near the edges of the lake. So to this day we have this witness of God's anger against the wicked.

In this dreadful judgment Lot lost his wife. She did not like to leave



PILLAR OF SALT BY THE DEAD SEA.

Sodom. Perhaps she thought of her daughters behind, or wanted to save her goods, or more likely did not quite believe that God was going to burn the place: and so she stood and looked, and the fiery rain fell upon her, and she was killed as she stood: and being covered over with what fell, as people are covered over in a fall of snow, she became a pillar of salt, or salt sulphur!

When Abraham rose in the morning, he went to a place whence he could see where Sodom and Gomorrah had stood; "and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

Here you see what an evil and a bitter thing it is to sin against God. This was a terrible fire; but "the earth and all the works that are in it" will by-and-by be burned up, on account of the wickedness which is in the world. God spares it for a while, but its end shall come; and all wicked people shall have their part in "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," which, because of its many horrors, is the name God gives to the place reserved for the wicked. Pray, then, to God, that he would save you from this dreadful place, as Lot was saved from burning Sodom, "the Lord being merciful unto him."

# Hagar and Ishmael.

GENESIS XXI. 9-21.

BESIDES Sarah, his first wife, Abraham married his maid, named Hagar, who was an Egyptian woman. Several of the patriarchs or good men of that period of the world had more wives than one; God permitted this in that dark age, though it was not according to his rule in the beginning of the world; but Christ, when he came, ordained that there should be no more polygamy.

Hagar had a son named Ishmael, and Sarah had a son named Isaac. Ishmael was fourteen years older than Isaac, and big enough to know better, but he "mocked" his little brother Isaac, and teased him, when they were probably at play together.

Sarah loved her own son Isaac, and could not bear that he should be so treated by his elder brother: and though she had told Abraham to marry Hagar, she did not like her, and this behavior of her son so vexed her that she begged Abraham to turn both Hagar and Ishmael out of doors. Perhaps Hagar had not brought up Ishmael to behave like a good boy, and this made Sarah the more angry. It is a great blessing to have parents who teach us to love God, and to love one another. Abraham loved both his children; "and the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight:"—he was grieved that his children should quarrel, and grieved that Sarah should ask him to punish Hagar and Ishmael so severely.

But God determined that these children should be the heads of great nations, and in his wise providence he caused this affair to bring about what he intended should take place. "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight." So then God saw Ishmael mocking Isaac. "God," says Rev. Matthew Henry, "takes notice what children do in their play, and will reckon with them if they say or do amiss, though their parents do not."

And so the end of all this was, that Ishmael was turned out of doors for his bad behavior, and his mother too, for not teaching him better.

And now, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth verses of the chapter,

you have a very wonderful account of God's kindness to Hagar and Ishmael, when they were cast out. Abraham gave Hagar some bread, and a bottle of water, and sent her and her son away. And she wandered about in the wilderness, or wild country; and when the water was all drunk, and they were fainting with thirst and fatigue, she cast her son under one of the shrubs: and she sat down at a little distance and wept. And the poor boy cried aloud; "And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.



ANCIENT MODE OF GIVING DRINK.

And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink." Perhaps her eyes were swollen with crying, and she could scarcely see; but now she dried her tears, and looked around, and lo! there was a well which she had not seen before, and she and her son did not perish with thirst.

My dear young friend, wherever we are, there is a good God that looks down upon us. If even our friends forsake us, let us never forget to trust in God. Perhaps when Hagar "lifted up her voice, and wept," she also prayed—and so, perhaps, did Ishmael; for they must have learnt so to do

in the dwelling of pious Abraham. And God was there, to hear their prayers and their cries, and to see their tears. Let this comfort you when you are in sorrow, and teach you to pray to God for his help. He will then surely bless you, and do you good.

Note 1.—You must have seen that we first spelt the name of Isaac's father Abram, and then Abraham, for God altered his name. About this you read in the 17th chapter, and 4th and following verses. Abraham means "the father of a great multitude;" and from Abraham came all the Jews, who long served God: and all good men, as they are like Abraham, believe in God, and are called Abraham's seed, or children.

Note 2.—God also changed the name of Abraham's wife, as we learn from the 17th chapter and 15th verse, from SARAI, which means "contentious," to SARAI, which signifies "a princess;" for when God made her the mother of Isaac, she was to be the mother, or princess, of many nations, that should be born of her race; and especially in her family, in course of time, was to be born Jesus Christ, "the Prince of Peace."

## Abraham Offering up his Son Isaac.

GENESIS XXII.

YOU should read this chapter very carefully; for it is very interesting and important. Abraham had long wished to have a son, and when Isaac was born he was called by the name Isaac, which means laughter, to show how glad the good old man and his aged wife were to have a son to comfort them in their old age, and whom they could both love.

But perhaps they thought of Isaac more than of God; and if they did so, they did that which was very wrong, for we ought to love God above all persons or things in the world.

Abraham and Sarah, no doubt, knew all this, and they did love God; but still there might be a danger of their loving Isaac so as to give him a share of love that did not belong to him, but to God only.

Perhaps, therefore, to put Abraham to the trial, and to show how far he would go in his love, as well as what real love to God can do, "God did tempt Abraham."

To tempt, among us, means to entice one another to do anything, and very often to do a wrong thing; but here it means only to try.

But what was this trial? God spake to Abraham, and said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Now, burnt-offerings were slain beasts, whose bodies, laid on the altar, were all consumed by fire.

Poor Abraham! had God said, I will make thy dear son sick; had he even said, In a few hours Isaac shall die: this would not half so much have pained his heart. But to be told to take his son for a sacrifice, and to offer him himself—his only son Isaac!—Isaac, whom he loved! Perhaps he wept very bitterly. Perhaps he prayed that Isaac might be spared. But God's will must be done, and he said nothing against it.

You may wonder that God should command him to kill his son; and were any one to suppose he had such a command now, he would show that he was tempted by the wicked spirit, and not tried by the Almighty: but, in those times, God spake in various ways to pious men, so that they knew when he did speak; and Abraham knew that he would not order him to do anything that was wrong.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him."

This journey took Abraham three days, so that all this time he might have repented and turned back. But Abraham knew that God was able to raise up his son even from the dead; and as God had told him that Isaac should be his heir, he would not dispute his word, but went on his way.

And now he came near the spot, and leaving the young men, he went up the mountain. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." Oh, what a moment was this for poor Abraham! in a few minutes more and his dear, dear son Isaac must be killed, and bleed like a lamb upon the altar; so he thought. Who can tell how much he was pained at his heart? but still he obeyed God.

Isaac had been taught by his good father to sacrifice to God, as was the custom of those days, and he began to wonder where the sacrifice was, and very innocently said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" Oh, how this must have touched the good old man's heart! Isaac had been a good son, and it was no wonder, then, if he dearly loved him. But he could not then make up his mine to tell him, and he only said,—still, perhaps, hoping that God would spare him in the end,—"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering; so they went both of them together."

And now Abraham built the altar and laid the wood in order—oh, did not his hands and his heart tremble? And now, perhaps, he said with a

trembling voice, "My Isaac, my dearly beloved Isaac! my son! my own son! my only son! thou joy of my old age! Oh, how shall I tell thee—but I must; thou art the sacrifice, and God has required it." Perhaps, too, he sobbed, and ceased to speak in the midst of his grief: all this was not unlikely. But, perhaps, as he had great faith in God, he shed no tear, nor breathed a single sigh. He knew that all he did must be right; at least he had much of such a spirit in him: and, like Abraham, when God afflicts us, we ought to say as Jesus Christ has taught us, "Thy will be done."

Isaac was a good youth. He was now about twenty years old. He had learned to love and serve God. It does not appear that he tried one moment to resist his good old father, who was one hundred and twenty years of age. He had gone with delight to worship God and join in the sacrifice; and now he was to be the offering—he gave himself willingly up. Oh, how must God love such obedient hearts!

Here, my dear young reader, let me tell you, that through life God will require you to give up many things to him, as he did require of Abraham



FOUR-HORNED BAM OF PALESTINE.

to give up his son. And you must learn to do it without a murmur at what he does, for he doth all things well.

And now "Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son."—It is enough. God has tried him. He is willing to obey his commands, but God does not want innocent blood. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham, lay not

thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Now the trial was over. God had proved Abraham, and, like pure metal passed through the fire, he found him very precious. His faith had not failed.

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."

You see that when God had tried the love of Abraham, he had kindness in reserve for him after all, and spared his son. Isaac must then have been dearer to him than ever, and God for his goodness dearer to them both.

This history reminds us of the love of God, in giving his Son, his only Son, for a sacrifice for us.' "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "He spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all!" "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." It was to point to his sacrifice, and to show that one better than all others together should come, that Abraham and all the pious then offered sacrifices to God. And these never ceased till Jesus Christ came, who is called the "offering once for all." Then all sacrifices were over, for Jesus had bled and died for the sins of a guilty world.

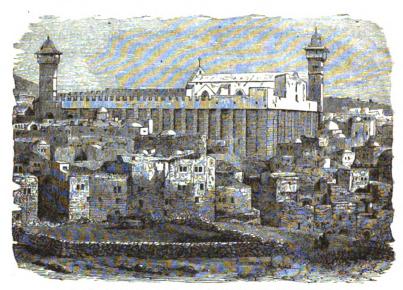
## The Death of Sarah.

Genesis xxiii. 1, 2.

AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died," and we read that "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her:" for he was probably at a distance, feeding his flocks, when she died. It is very affecting to lose our friends. And no doubt Isaac wept for Sarah, too. And would not you, if you were to lose your dear mother from whom you have received so much kindness? But if we lose our friends, and they and we love Jesus Christ, we may hope to meet again in a better world.

We are told that Abraham bought a burying-place of one whose name was Ephron, and he paid for it at the gates of the city called Mamre, afterwards known by the name Hebron. The gates or ways into the city,

like Temple-Bar in London and many other archways in other places, had, it is thought, rooms over them, where the chief men settled all matters of right among the people. Here Abraham agreed for the price, and paid the



MOSQUE AT HEBRON, HAVING THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH UNDERNEATH.

money for the burying-place. "And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver" he was to pay; for there were no coins in general circulation then, and when a purchase was made the silver or gold was weighed out in their balances, a pound of silver having a fixed value. The price which Abraham paid was four hundred shekels of silver. A shekel of silver was worth about fifty-six cents, and the whole price paid by Abraham for this field and cave was about two hundred and forty dollars. But money was worth so much more then than it is now, that that sum would be equal to about fifteen hundred dollars now.

Abraham buried his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, in the land of Canaan. It was usual in those times and in that country to bury people in caves, which were like little chambers cut out of the side of some hill, or vaults bricked or arched over; and here the whole of a family would lie together. This is "the house appointed for all living;" and though we may have no other spot on earth, we must all have a burial-place; or though we may own ever so much of the earth, a burial-place must be our only lot in the earth at last.

## The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekai.

#### GENESIS XXIV. 2-4.

ABRAHAM was now one hundred and forty years old, for he was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah. Like a kind father, he was desirous of his son doing well and being happy in life, and he wished to see Isaac married. But as there were people who served false gods all around him, he would have his son take care not to choose any one of them for a wife; he therefore called his steward, who was the head servant of his house, and no doubt a good and faithful man, and he desired him to take an oath, or give his solemn word, that he would go among his relations, where the true God was worshipped, and seek him a wife.

The servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh; and this was a sign used at that time to show that he swore, or promised faithfully,—for by swearing is not meant in this case the use of any wicked words; Abraham was too good a man to want such words to be used—he would rather have reproved any one for using them.

And see here what respect good servants deserve from their masters, and their masters' children; Abraham trusts this matter entirely with his servant, and Isaac no doubt approved of it, for he was old enough to have objected.

And now the good servant, having sworn to his master, set out on his way to the city of Nahor, or where Nahor lived, who was Abraham's brother. This city was called Haran, and was in the country called Mesopotamia. "And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed: for all the goods of his master were in his hand," or trusted to his care.

The camel is a very useful beast in the eastern parts of the world, and rich people had then, and still have, great numbers of these animals: they are very strong, and will carry very large loads—as much as a thousand pounds in weight. Some have two humps on their back, and some have one; they will go long journeys through hot deserts without any water. Abraham's servant took ten of these, laden with presents for the expected wife of Isaac and her friends.

Having ended his journey of several days, he made his camels to kneel

down without the city by a well of water, at the time of the evening—even the time that women go out to draw water.

Camels are early taught to kneel, that they may take rest, and be loaded and unloaded, as they are very high.



CAMELS AND THEIR FURNITURE

The women went to the well in the evening to draw water; and in Arabia, to this day, the women do the same.

And now Abraham's servant prayed to God that he would direct in his providence, that the young woman who should offer him and his camels water should be the wife of Isaac.

We can never hope for a blessing on anything that we do that is important in life unless we pray to God for it.

When the servant had done praying, Rebekah, who was the daughter of Bethuel, Abraham's brother's son, came to the well, and brought a pitcher on her shoulder; and she was very kind, and good-natured, and obliging, and did present the servant and his camels with water; and as there were ten camels, it was no small trouble.

All this must have pleased the good servant, or rather the steward; and with all this we learn that "the damsel was very fair to look upon," but her beauty would have been nothing, if she had not had good temper.

You must not wonder at Rebekah going to draw the water, for it was quite usual then, and in that country, for persons of the first rank to be so employed. Industry is no disgrace to any rank, but idleness always is.

The steward now hoped that his journey would succeed, and he gave Rebekah a golden ear-ring and two bracelets for her arms, which together weighed ten shekels and a half, every shekel of gold being worth about four and a half dollars.

The steward next asked her about her relations, and inquired if they could give him a lodging for himself and camels.

In that country it is quite usual still, for those who have large houses, or roomy tents, to show the same politeness and hospitality to travellers. They have large court-yards for the beasts, and plenty of room for any friends or respectable strangers.

Having so far succeeded, the good man "bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord," or thanked God. We ought always to thank God for all our comforts.

And now Rebekah, having learnt who he was, ran and told her mother:



LABAN'S WELL, AT HARAN.

the women lived in apartments by themselves, as they still do in the East. And then her brother Laban soon learnt the news; and he ran out to the man, and invited him in, and told him he had room for himself and camels.

"And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and

gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him."

Laban's father was perhaps dead, or not able to move about with age, and so Laban was the acting master of the house.

And now the steward told about his master's wealth, and that he had a son born in his old age, and what had passed between him and his master about Isaac's marriage, and what he had prayed, and what had happened at the well.

When he had finished, Laban and Bethuel agreed to let Rebekah go, as they saw God's will was in the matter. This Bethuel is thought to have been a younger brother of Rebekah, and not the father. And they blessed Rebekah, or expressed the kindest wishes for her, that she might be comforted in her children, and that they might be many, and overcome all their enemies.

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way."

And it happened that Isaac was walking in the field on the evening of their arrival; and seeing them coming, he went towards them. And Rebekah inquired of the steward who he was; and as was, and is, the custom of that country, she put a veil on her face as a token of modesty on meeting Isaac; for nothing in a woman is so lovely as modesty in behavior.

And now the different customs required were all gone through, and Isaac took Rebekah to be his companion for life; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

## The Death of Abraham.

GENESIS XXV. 8-10.

BRAHAM, the friend of God, is at last called to die. His had been a longer life than the lives of men now. He had left his country and kindred at God's command, and had gone into a distant land, which God promised to give to his descendants in a future generation, but he himself owned nothing in it, except a burial-place. He was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born, and when that son was approaching manhood, his faith was tried by the command to offer him in sacrifice; and he was spared only at the last moment. Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah, by the side of Sarah.





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It is said he died of "a good old age."

Abraham had spent all his best days in serving God; he looked back upon them with pleasure, and now his old age had become happy and good.

But here, we must tell you, that Abraham, though a good man, had his faults. You will often read of the faults of good men, as you read your Bible; and they are told you for two reasons: first, that you should avoid them, and not commit the same; and, secondly, to show that God would not hide them, and that he was displeased with them, and often corrected good men severely for them.

In the twentieth chapter of Genesis we find Abraham, contrary to that faith or trust which he had in God, guilty of keeping back the truth when he ought to have spoken it, which was no credit to him. He went into the country of King Abimelech, and as he foolishly feared that the king might take his wife Sarah, and make her a queen, she being very beautiful, he told her to say she was his sister. This was so far true, for they had both the same father, but not the same mother; but then it implied that she was not his wife. And he had nearly brought himself, and Sarah, and the king, into great distress, by his mistrust of God's care in this instance.

But while we read of these faults and follies in good men, as faithfully told in the Bible, let it lead us to pray to God to keep us from doing the same, and to ask his grace that we may imitate their numerous virtues.

Isaac and Ishmael buried their father with all due regard for his memory, for "the memory of the just is blessed;" even Ishmael paid this respect to the remains of his father, though Ishmael was not a good man.

# Esau Selling his Birthright, and Isaac's Prosperity.

GENESIS XXV. 27-34; XXVI. 13, 14.

ERE is a new race springing up: thus "one generation passeth away" like a shadow, "and another generation cometh." Rebekah is now introduced to us as the mother of Esau and Jacob: these differed in their pursuits; Esau loved hunting, and was cunning in laying his snares to catch his game, while Jacob was a plain man, watching his flocks and his herds.

Esau and Jacob were twins, or born at the same time; but Esau having been born a moment before Jacob, he was the eldest brother.

Now to the elder brother, among the Hebrews, belonged many benefits, among the rest, he had honor paid him next to his parents; he had a double

portion of the inheritance; and the Messiah, or Jesus Christ, was to be born, in time, of his family—a blessing of the greatest price.

Jacob aimed to get the birthright, or privileges of the first-born; and it appears from another part of this book, that his mother being fond of him, wished him to have it, and no doubt set Jacob to watch his moment to supplant his brother.

This is a blot in Jacob's character; and it afterwards led to another, as one bad thing generally does. But Jacob turned out an excellent man at last; we must therefore follow that which was good in him, and not dwell on his faults.

Esau, however, deserved to lose his birthright, for he did not seem to set much value upon it, when he sold it for a paltry mess of pottage. No doubt he could have got something else in his mother's house; but, on reaching home, hungry and tired after hunting, nothing else would suit his fancy but Jacob's mess which he had been preparing; and so Jacob, seizing the opportunity, made his bargain, and tricked poor Esau.

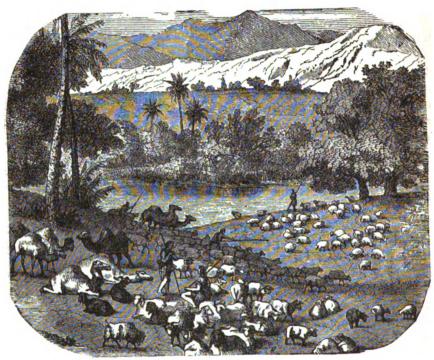
Jacob's pottage was made of lentiles—what were they? A kind of bean which is still used in those parts, and makes a drink, looking red, something like coffee: and for this "Esau despised his birthright."

The next chapter tells us much of Isaac's prosperity and of his dealings with the Philistine king, Abimelech, to whose country he went in a time of famine. He had become so wealthy, in flocks and herds and servants, that Abimelech's officers and servants became jealous of him, and manifested their jealousy by stopping up the wells which Abraham's servants had dug in that very dry country, and in quarrelling with Isaac's servants when they dug any new ones; so that Isaac finally removed to what was afterwards southern Judea—to Beersheba. But Isaac was guilty of the same fault as his father Abraham, and with less excuse. Fearing lest Abimelech should take Rebekah from him, and kill him, he called her his sister, though she was only a second cousin. God punished him for this deception, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## Isaac blessing Jacob.

#### GENESIS XXVII.

THE following is the history in this chapter: Isaac was now very old; it is reckoned that he must have been about one hundred and thirty-six years of age, and that Jacob was about seventy-seven. The old



WHERE ABRAM PED HIS PLOCKS

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man's eyes were grown nearly blind with age. He thought that, from the length of years he had lived, his life could not last much longer. He therefore desired his son Esau to come and take the blessing which belonged to the first-born.

As a proof of his obedience to his father, he asked him to get him some of his nice meat, which he killed with the bow and arrow; and when he had prepared it, he was to have the blessing.

This blessing was a very solemn thing. It was what parents used to give to their children when they were about to die and leave them behind; and the patriarchs had a spirit of prophecy given them from heaven, so that what they said foretold what was to come to pass respecting their families. The first-born always had a right to the best blessing.

Now, Rebekah heard what Isaac said to Esau, and, as Jacob was her favorite son, she resolved that he should try and get the blessing. There is some excuse for her conduct, because she had been told from God himself, in a particular way, respecting her sons, before they were born, "The elder shall serve the younger"—yet not excuse enough for her to tell Jacob to do that which was wrong, to bring about what God had promised. This was very foolish; and because she did wrong, she was punished afterwards by many troubles which sprung out of this very affair, like bitter branches out of a bitter root.

Rebekah told Jacob to take two kids from his flocks and let her have them, and she would make savory meat of them for Isaac; and he should go to him under the pretence that he was Esau, and offer the meat and get the blessing; for as Isaac was almost blind, he could not see his face clearly.

Jacob, however, remembered that Esau was a strong man, covered with hair; and he thought that, if his father touched him, he would find out that it was not Esau, and that he would be so displeased at his trying to deceive him, that he would curse him instead of blessing him.

But his mother encouraged him; and to make his skin like Esau's, she fitted some goat-skins to his hands and his neck: for the goats in the East have very delicate hair, which might by its feel pass for that on a strong man's skin.

And now Jacob made haste with the meat, and took it to his father before Esau could come home from hunting. And he said, "I am Esau, thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee; sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

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This was a very wicked deception on Jacob's part, and he afterwards suffered for it severely, and his descendants suffered for it, too; for the consequences of sin reach far into the future. Jacob probably reasoned in this way: that as he had bought the birthright of his brother, and the prediction had been made that the elder should serve the younger, he had a right to secure the blessing even by fraud; but this was no justification for his sin.

However, Jacob did succeed in getting the blessing. His father suspected his voice; but his raiment smelt of the sweet perfumes of Esau's garments, which it is thought were used to keep them from moths, and of which his mother had procured one from his chests on this occasion,—perhaps a garment kept for the elder sons.

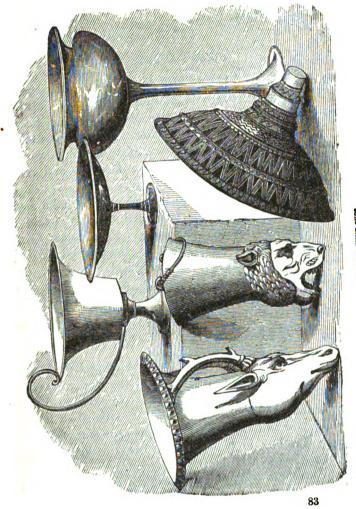
So Isaac ate of his meat and drank of his wine; which, it is thought, was a kind of religious rite before pronouncing the blessing. "And his father Isaac said, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." That is, his garments smelt like a field in which sweet spices grow in abundance, through God's blessing on the soil, as we smell the sweet-scented bean field when it is in full flower. He added, "Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine!" It rains only at particular times in that part of the world; but then God sends heavy dews, something like such as we have about three or four o'clock on a summer's morning, but much thicker; and these falling upon the fields make them rich in crops, yielding corn to grind for bread, and grapes to make wine.

Isaac further said, "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Scarcely had Jacob left Isaac when Esau returned, and he hastened to his father with his savory meat.

But now he was justly punished for selling his birthright; notwithstanding which, and though he had taken an oath to part with it for the . red pottage, he tried to obtain it.

And the aged "Isaac trembled exceedingly," as he remembered his doubts, and knew who had deceived him; but being governed by a spirit of prophecy, that is, having spoken by the guidance of God, he said of Jacob, "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed."



Poor Esau now cried bitterly, and he said, "Bless me, even me also, O my father! hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"

And Isaac gave him a blessing also; but it was not that of the first-born: he lost his birthright.

## Jacob's Dream.

### GENESIS XXVIII. 12, 13.

ESAU was in the greatest rage on account of the loss of his birthright, and as he expected that his father would soon die, since he was so old he vowed that he would then kill his brother. Rebekah was told what he said, and Jacob, by her advice, fled for safety to his uncle Laban, at Haran; but, before he left, Isaac bade him farewell, and renewed his blessing at parting.

Isaac also gave Jacob a charge that he should not take any one for a wife that did not serve the true God, and that he should therefore try and marry one of Laban's daughters. Esau knew this, and to satisfy his father he went to Ishmael, his uncle, and married his daughter in addition to the two Canaanite wives he already had.

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba," where Isaac and Rebekah now lived, "and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep."

This seems to us to have been a very hard bed, especially to a man who had walked a long distance; but the people of the East are accustomed to hard pillows, and rest their necks rather than their heads on them; and as Bethel, where he had his dream, was about sixty miles from Beersheba, he had probably slept for two nights already in the open air; besides, "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents," and his hardy nature made him feel less the want of the comforts of home.

And, whilst Jacob was asleep, he dreamed the dream mentioned in this chapter.

This was one way in which the Lord spake to the patriarchs, and Jacol could know that it was divine, and no common dream. The ladder which he saw reaching from heaven to earth, and which was full of angels, or heavenly messengers, going up and down, will show us, as well as Jacob, that God's angels watch over us when we sleep, especially if we cast ourselves into God's care; and how must Jacob's heart have been strengthened

when God himself then spoke and said, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again unto this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

This event was very comforting to Jacob; and as we ought to remember the mercies of God at all times, he set up a stone on the spot, that he might know it when at any distant time he should return home; and he poured oil upon it, probably in token that there he would build an altar to worship God; for "he called the name of that place Bethel," which means the house of God, for there he had seen God, and there he hoped again to see him in his gracious goodness towards him. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:" not that he meant he should not be his God if he did not do all these things for him, for Jacob showed he would have no other God by resolving to take no wife but one that would serve God; but he meant that then he would make a particular mention of him, and declare what a God his God was. This appears from what he further says: "This stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

## Jacob and the Daughters of Laban.

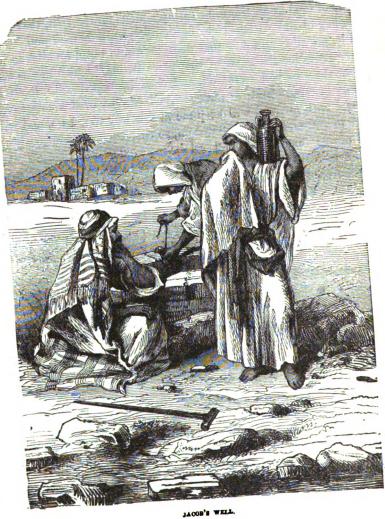
GENESIS XXIX. 15-20.

JACOB now knowing well that God would protect him, went on gladly to Haran, or "The Land of the People of the East," as it lay east of Canaan.

On coming to Haran he saw a well—perhaps the same where Abraham's servant stopped; and there is a well near that spot still, called by some Jacob's Well, although Jacob was there between three and four thousand yars ago. There he also stopped; and there were flocks of sheep resting near it, waiting for water, attended by their shepherds.

Jacob very civilly spoke to the shepherds, and asked if they knew Laban. They told him that they did know him—that he was well, and that Rachel, his daughter, was then coming with her father's sheep to get water for them.

Jacob rolled away the great stone which covered the well, to keep the water clean, "and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother."



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He then kissed his dear relation, Rachel, telling her who he was; and she ran and told her father.

Laban hastened to the well, and was glad to see Jacob, and asked him to go home with him.

Jacob then told him "all these things;"—that he had got his brother's birthright—that Esau had for this cause said that he would kill him—that he had come there for safety—that God had appeared to him in a dream, and had promised to protect him and prosper him—that he had met with Rachel at the well—and that he had come to take a wife out of his family.

Laban told him that he might live with him and mind his flocks, but he should have wages for his work.

As Jacob had no presents to make for his daughter, according to the custom of the country, he told his uncle that he would serve him seven years, if he would agree that Rachel should then become his wife.

When the seven years were gone, Jacob said, "Give me my wife,"—but his uncle cheated him, and gave him Leah. He however promised him Rachel if he would serve seven years more.

Here you see that Jacob, having cheated Isaac by pretending to be Esau, was just served in the same way by Laban, who gave him Leah instead of Rachel.

After seven days' feasting, as was usual, Jacob had also Rachel for his wife, for whom he was to serve another seven years.

## Jacob and his Flocks.

Genesis xxx. 25-28; xxxi. 3.

THE fourteen years which Jacob had engaged to serve for Rachel and Leah being expired, he wanted to return to see his father; having got no other reward for very hard service than Laban's daughters with their families.

But Laban did not like to part with Jacob, for God had blessed him for Jacob's sake. It is a great blessing to be connected with really good people.

Now Laban knew that Jacob was not a covetous man, as he himself was, and that he would not ask him too much for his services; so he said to him, "Appoint me," or fix, "thy wages, and I will give it."

Then said Jacob, You shall give me all the speckled and spotted goats and sheep that may from this time be brought forth among the flocks.

So we learn, "the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels and asses."

Laban and his sons, seeing how Jacob prospered, put on very black looks towards him. Being under the divine direction, and having consulted his wives upon the subject, he therefore resolved to quit Laban, and return to Canaan.

"Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aran [or Mesopotamia], for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan."

"And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead," a distance of three hundred and eighty miles from Haran.

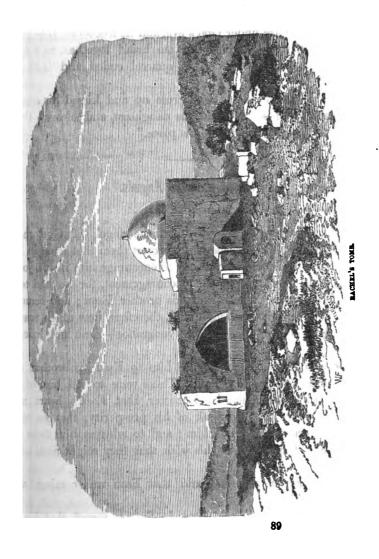
Laban might have designed to bring Jacob back by fair promises, or else to have avenged himself upon him in case of refusal; but "God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." Laban, therefore, only accused Jacob of running away from him, and of taking away his gods.

For Rachel, unknown to Jacob, had stolen some things supposed to have been images or brass-work, which Laban used to consult like a conjuror, to know what would come to pass. Probably, Rachel knew better than to suppose that they were of any use, but wished to take such silly things from her deluded father. He, therefore, supposing that Jacob had got them, said, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" Foolish man! to call those his gods that could be stolen! And yet there are millions of our fellow-creatures, in distant parts of the world, who now worship as gods things of the most absurd kind, made of wood and other articles, and know nothing of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of perishing sinners.

Laban searched everywhere for his gods, but could not find them; and he made Jacob angry by his rude behavior: however, if Jacob was wrong in being angry, Laban was not less so in provoking him by nis bad conduct.

Jacob told him how hard a master he had been, for he had made him pay for the cattle torn by wild beasts and stolen; he had had fourteen years' service for his two daughters, and six years' for the cattle, and had changed his wages no less than ten times; being never contented with his bargains: so that if God had not prospered him, he would never have had anything for all his labor.





Laban then proposed an agreement between them, which Jacob was very ready to make; and they set up some stones as a mark, and gave a promise that they would never pass those stones with designs to do harm to each other; and "the God of Abraham" was asked to witness the promise: for wherever we are, we are under God's eye, and he knows all that we say and do. They also offered a sacrifice and ate bread together, as a proof that they both parted friends. Thus the quarrel ended, and God protected Jacob.

"And early in the morning Laban rose up and kissed his sons,"—that is, in this place, grandsons—"and his daughters, and blessed them; and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

## Jacob and the Angels.

### Genesis xxxii. 1.

AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." Angels are God's servants, to protect them that trust in him, and these spirits were made known to Jacob to encourage him in his journey.

Now Jacob had great need of this encouragement, for he had to pass by the way in which he might meet with his brother Esau; and remembering how he had obtained his birthright, and, therefore, how much reason Esau had to be angry, he was afraid of his vengeance—Esau not being a good man.

"And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom." These were to tell him of his long absence, and troubles under a hard master, that Esau's heart might be softened. They were also to speak of his prosperity, that he might not suppose that he wanted more of him; and to address him from Jacob in language of respect, and express his wish that they might meet each other as brothers.

The messengers returned, and said that Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him.

Poor Jacob was now sadly frightened; for he feared that his brother would kill him and the children, and take all that he had.

He therefore divided the people and flocks into two bands, so that if he fell upon one the other might have time to escape; and so, his wife and children being in the hindmost band, he might save their lives.

He then thought that he would send presents to his brother to gain his good will; and ordered servants to go, one after another, with droves of cattle of various sorts, five hundred and eighty animals in all; which they were directed to tell Esau were sent for his acceptance. After this present, Jacob sent his wives and children over the river Jabbok, he himself remaining on its north bank, where he spent the night in earnest prayer. After the midnight hour, there appeared to him one, who, though in human form, yet possessed more than human power, who wrestled with him, but without overcoming him. Jacob undoubtedly knew or suspected that his antagonist was the angel of the covenant—Jehovah—and the struggle was one of earnest prayer, more than a wrestling of the body. At length by a dextrous touch, this divine wrestler put Jacob's thigh out of joint, and then said, "Let me go: for the day breaketh," but Jacob still clung to him, demanding a blessing: his name was changed to Israel, a Prince of God, and he received an assurance of the divine favor.

## Meeting of Jacob and Esau.

GENESIS XXXIII.

JACOB, having divided the people and flocks into separate bodies, now went forward to meet Esau; and, after the custom of the East, he bowed himself frequently to the ground. The manner of bowing in the East is

different from ours—here is a picture of a person so doing. And then Esau, having got off the beast he probably rode, ran to him, and, with all the kind feelings of a brother, put his arms round his neck and kissed him. If Esau had come with any design to do Jacob harm, God had softened his heart; and certainly he showed a noble spirit in forgiving his brother who had once done him so much injury, but who now, however, showed how much he wished to make him amends for it.



OFFERING SALUTATION IN THE EAST.

Next Jacob's family approached Esau,
and bowed themselves also, and then Jacob offered his presents to his brother.

But Esau, not being covetous, wanted nothing to reconcile him.

Jacob, however, was not quite sure of his brother's sincerity, and, perhaps, feared that when the first warm feeling of his heart had been shown, it would grow cooler and he might be in danger; he therefore said, "Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God,"—meaning that it was pleasant, as a sight of God's favor is also pleasant—"and thou wast pleased with me." In Eastern countries if a present be offered to a superior and he will not take it there is much to fear from his refusal; but if he accept it, it is a mark of his favor and protection, and there is nothing to fear.



RECEIVING SALUTATION IN THE EAST.

Jacob also wished to give his brother something in token of kindness, and in return for the harm he had formerly done him. "And he urged him, and he took it."

Esau now offered either to keep him company or to leave some servants behind as a guard of honor or safety, that he might look more grand, or be protected against dangers; but this Jacob did not need, and so they parted.

Jacob went for a while to a place called Succoth, and afterwards he

removed to "Shalem, a city of Shechem," and there he bought some land for the use of his cattle.

There also he erected an altar, and called it by a name which meant God, the God of Israel: thus he returned thanks to God for having preserved him and blessed him, and allowed him to return to the land of Canaan.

## The Slaying of the Shechemites.

GENESIS XXXIV. 25-31.

JACOB had but one daughter, the child of Leah, whose name was Dinah. She was younger than any of her brothers, except Joseph and Benjamin, and was evidently a great favorite with all of them.

Dinah, probably thinking herself lonely at home, wished to go and see "the daughters of the land," and to visit the ungodly people of Shechem; and her mother, perhaps from a foolish fondness, gave her leave.

Dinah was now about fifteen or sixteen years of age; and Shechem, the prince of the country, having seen her, resolved to take her by force and curry her home, and never let her return to her father's house again, but have her for his wife.

But the family of Israel were not to marry with any of those who were not worshippers of the true God.

Shechem and his father Hamor, however, did all they could to persuade Jacob to let Shechem keep his daughter, for whom he felt a strong affection; and as in those times a man gave a dowry, or something of value, to the parents for taking away their daughters for wives, Shechem offered any sum that might be asked.

Jacob's sons pretended to agree, but on one condition, which was, that the Shechemites should practise the religious forms of the Hebrews. To this Hamor and his son consented; and so did all the people, out of regard to their prince, who seems, notwithstanding his carrying away Dinah, to have had some good qualities.

The Shechemites, having fulfilled their agreement and submitted to the religious customs of the Hebrews, fully relied on their good faith; but when they were quite off their guard two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword and came upon the city boldly and slew all the males and rescued their sister. And "they took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field. And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."

This was a treacherous and cruel act on the part of Jacob's sons, and he could not but be very angry at it. It was, indeed, just in God to permit the Shechemites so to perish, for they had only become religious for the sake of pleasing their prince and benefiting by their union with the Hebrews; and God hates hypocrisy.

But as far as it respected Jacob's sons doing this act, it was very wicked, for they broke their faith with the Shechemites, and besides that they punished a whole city for the fault of one man.

Jacob feared now for the honor of religion as well as for the safety of his family: for who after this would be likely to trust an Israelite? And if

God did not particularly guard him, all the tribes round about might fall upon him to avenge so cruel a deed.

### Jacob and the Strange Gods.

Genesis xxxv. 1-5.

WHILE Jacob was perplexed about the cruel conduct of his sons Simeon and Levi, and afraid lest it should bring a host of enemies upon him, God appeared to him, and commanded him to remove to Bethel.



ANCIENT HOUSEHOLD GODS.

Jacob then ordered all the false gods to be put out of his family, which it is supposed that the servants he brought from Syria, when he left Laban, had kept among them, and, perhaps, some had been brought from the Shechemites.

Jacob now ordered the garments of his people also to be changed, for, perhaps, many of them were stained with blood in the late cruel affair.

He likewise took away a quantity of earrings, which were either stuck in the ears of

the false gods or worn by the people as charms to protect them, as they thought, from danger; and these he buried with the strange gods under an oak tree, near Shechem, that nobody might have them any more.

And though Jacob was now in as much or more danger than he was formerly from Esau, yet God made the people around afraid of touching him; and so he escaped and went to Bethel, and there he praised and worshipped



EASTERN HOUSEHOLD GODS.

God and set up a pillar, as we build monuments, in remembrance of his goodness.

Jacob then removed from Bethel, and on his journey Benjamin was born, and Rachel his mother died. This chapter also tells us that Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died; and that Isaac died, aged one hundred and eighty

years: he was a good and peaceable man. Esau and Jacob, being reconciled, united in burying their good old father.

In this chapter we have the names of Jacob's twelve sons, who were called the twelve *patriarchs*, or *chiefs*, of numerous families and tribes.

Leah's sons were six: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulon. She was also the mother of Dinah, Jacob's daughter.

Rachel had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, had two sons, Dan and Naphtali. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, had two sons, Gad and Asher.

The tribe of Joseph was usually called after the names of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim; and though this would make thirteen tribes, yet



EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD GODS.

Levi was not reckoned among them, as that tribe was appointed by God to be priests, and to do only sacred work.

### Esau's final Removal from Canaan.

GENESIS XXXVI. 6, 7.

YOU may, perhaps, wish to know what became of Esau after he had buried his father.

He took what property came to him, and left Canaan entirely to his brother Jacob. He had now become very rich, as his father, when he comforted him after he had lost his birthright, had foretold: "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above." As it seldom rains in hot countries, the dews that wet the ground make its herbs and trees to bear fruit in abundance; and the words of his father clearly meant, that his lands should be well watered, and bring him much riches; and so it came to pass. Henceforward he and his descendants lived in Mount Seir, a mountainous but fertile region of Arabia Petræa, S. S. E. of the Dead Sea, originally inhabited by the Horites or cave-dwellers.

#### Joseph and his Brethren.

#### GENESIS XXXVII.

JOSEPH was the eldest son of Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob: he was very dear to his father, because his mother was dead; and he was his comfort, being a dutiful and affectionate child. No wonder, therefore, that his father loved him; but still he was wrong to make so marked a distinction between him and the rest of his brothers. He made him a coat of many colors, probably being cloths of different dyes sewn together in stripes, and this, no doubt, greatly tended to add to the envy of his brethren; besides which, they did bad things, and he told of them,—so that at last they hated him, and could not speak a kind word to him.

Joseph was now seventeen years of age; and though he was his father's darling, he was not brought up in idleness. "Those that are trained up to do nothing are likely to be good for nothing;" Joseph was therefore a shepherd, and fed the flocks with his brethren.

"And Joseph dreamed a dream." He thought he was binding sheaves in the field, and his brethren's sheaves all bowed to his sheaf. And he dreamt again that the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed to him.

These his brethren and father explained as meaning that they were to bow to him; and his brethren hated him the more on this account, while his father blamed him for telling such dreams, but kept them in his memory, to see what would come to pass.

"And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem," where, perhaps, Jacob was afraid they might be in danger of being attacked and killed, as they had attacked and killed the Shechemites. And Jacob sent Joseph to see if they were safe.

At length he "found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams." In this way they proposed to commit murder; and then, as one sin leads to another, to cover that murder with a lie.

Reuben and Judah did not, however, agree in this treatment of their brother; Reuben said, "Do not sin against the child," for Joseph was a child to them. But "they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that

was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit." Poor Joseph had, in the anguish of his soul, besought them to have pity on him; but they would not hear. So he was left, after his journey, to perish in the pit with hunger and cold.

But not long after, some Ishmaelites and Midianites, who were merchants, happened to be travelling that way in company; and Judah proposed to sell Joseph to them, by which means they should easily get rid of him, and he would, probably, never be likely to become their master, for he would go into Egypt, and there be sold as a slave. So "they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver"—that is, about fifteen dollars of our money—and "they brought Joseph into Egypt."

Reuben was just then gone from his brethren; and probably by a roundabout way he arrived at the pit, with a design to get his brother out and send him safe home. But to his surprise he was not there, and as a token of his grief he rent his clothes.

"And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and they dipped the coat in the blood." This coat they sent



JOSEPH'S COAT BROUGHT TO JACOB.

to poor old Jacob, to ask if it did not belong to Joseph, and to make him suppose that a wild beast had torn his dear boy to pieces and devoured him. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins,"—that is, a very coarse cloth, of which sacks were, and still are, made; which, besides the tearing of the clothes, was a further sign of grief;—and he "mourned for his son many days."

# Joseph in Potiphar's House.

GENESIS XXXIX.

JOSEPH was sold to Potiphar, who was captain of Pharaoh's guard.

He was a good youth, and feared God; and God so blest him, that his master took a great liking to him, and made him head servant over all his house.

But Joseph's mistress was a wicked woman, and she planned his ruin, because he would not break his master's confidence, by constantly keeping company with her; which would have been very much out of order for the young man, and especially one in his situation.

And Joseph reasoned with her, and said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

At length Potiphar's wife one day caught hold of Joseph's outer garment, and as he fled from her, not wishing to be found in company with so wicked a woman, she held the garment fast till it fell from him, and then she kept it, and showed it to Potiphar when he came home, and said to him that Joseph had come to her to mock and insult her while he was out; that this was not to be borne from a Hebrew slave; that she had lifted up her voice and cried for some one to take him away; and that when she did so he fled, and dropped his garment, which she had kept as a proof he had been there.

This wicked lie was believed by Potiphar, and he directly threw Joseph "into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison," where they hurt his feet with fetters, and he was bound in iron.—(Psalm cv. 18.)

But still "the Lord was with Joseph;" and in the prison he soon got the favor of the keeper, who trusted its affairs in his hands, and God prospered him.

### Joseph in Prison.

#### GENERIS XI.

WHILE Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh was displeased with two of his servants. One was his chief butler, who supplied him with wine; and the other was his chief baker, who supplied him with bread.

Now, no slave or common person was allowed to serve in the presence of the kings of Egypt; these chief officers were, therefore, of the most noble families, and were, on that account, put into the state prison where Joseph was. "And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them."

After a time, when Joseph went to see them one morning, he found them both looking very dull, as if something was the matter; and on asking them why they looked so sadly, they told him they had been dreaming, and were very anxious to know what their dreams meant.

Joseph in reply said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" that is, God only knows future events; and if your dreams mean anything, God only can tell what they mean. Then Joseph asked to know the dreams.

The chief butler said his was about a vine with three branches, which brought forth ripe grapes, and he pressed them into Pharaoh's cup for him to drink the juice, as was the custom of those times.

Now Joseph was taught by God to explain these dreams; and he told the butler that his meant that he should be restored in three days to Pharaoh's favor, and should give him his cup to drink out of as he used to do.

Joseph wanted no reward for this service, but only asked, that as he had been unjustly put in prison, he would, when restored to the king's favor, kindly speak a word to get him set at liberty.

The chief baker, finding that this was a pleasant explanation of the meaning of the butler's dream, then told his to Joseph.

He said he had dreamt that he had three white baskets on his head; and that in the one at the top he had baked meats for the king, but the birds eat them out of the basket on his head.

Joseph told him that his dream meant that in three days his head should be cut off, and he should be hung on a gibbet, and the birds should eat his flesh.

Three days after this was Pharaoh's birthday, and what Joseph said came to pass—the butler was restored to favor, and the baker was hung.

# Joseph raised to Honor.

#### GENESIS XLI.

TWO years more passed away, and still poor Joseph remained in prison. Then Pharaoh dreamed that seven fat kine came out of the river Nile, and fed in a meadow, and seven lean kine came after, and ate up the fat kine.

He went to sleep again, and again he had a dream; and he thought he saw seven ears of fine corn springing up from the ground, and after that sprung up seven thin ears, blasted by the hot east wind known by travellers under the name of *simoom*,—a wind which, in the deserts of Arabia, often suffocates large numbers of persons who are travelling, by blowing suddenly like a flame upon them: and these thin ears ate up the full ones.







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Now there were men in Egypt called magicians, or cunning men, who pretended, by thinking on the stars, to know what would happen to people; and as Pharaoh was distressed about his dreams, he sent for some of these men to tell him what they meant, but they could not even pretend to tell anything about them.

Then the chief butler, probably hoping to get higher into favor by telling of Joseph, told him that there was a young man, a prisoner in the king's prison, who had interpreted a dream which he had when he was there, and also another of the chief baker's, and had told them what came to pass; and he would recommend him to try what he could do.

Pharaoh, glad to catch at anything to ease his mind, sent directly for Joseph; and as soon as he saw him, without asking him who or what he was, he told *him* his dreams.

Joseph was divinely taught to see that they meant that the river Nile,

which overflows the land of Egypt, and causes it every year to bring forth a harvest, should overflow it so as to produce an abundance for seven years; and then it should flow so sparingly that there would be no water to water the sown grounds; and there should be seven years of dreadful famine, so that people would not be able to get any bread to eat.



JOSEPH BEFORE PHARAOH.

Joseph then told Pharaoh that

he ought to find some wise man, who would lay up one-fifth part of the corn in plentiful years, and perhaps buy more, and keep it in store till the years of scarcity, so that the people might not starve.

Pharaoh was satisfied with what he said, and no doubt God moved the mind of the king to believe Joseph, as much as he did the mind of Joseph to explain his dreams.

Then the king thought that none could be found like Joseph—so full of wisdom; and he appointed him ruler, next to himself, over all the land of Egypt; and he clothed him finely, and put a ring on his finger, and a gold chain round his neck; and he made him to ride in a fine state chariot, and the people bowed to him in respect, as we in civility do to great men when we approach them.

And Pharaoh gave him a name of distinction, as our kings make dukes and lords; and he found him a wife to be his companion and comforter.

And then Joseph went out through the land, probably to build granaries, or places to keep the corn, and find persons to look after it; as he could not do it all himself.

He was now thirty years of age, and as he was seventeen when he was sold into Egypt, he had been just thirteen years a slave.

At length the famine came; and it was not only in Egypt, but in all the countries round about, so that the people came from them to buy corn in Egypt; and everybody looked to Joseph to be supplied with what they wanted to save them from perishing for hunger.

## Joseph's Brethren in Egypt buying Corn.

#### GENESIS XLII. 1-8.

THE famine had now got into Canaan, which, it seems, was often troubled by it; and, indeed, before men learnt to know how to farm and manage the ground, which was not then studied as it is with us, famines were very common. Canaan was often troubled with them; you remember that Abraham and Isaac both went into Egypt on account of famine in Canaan; and now Jacob sends to Egypt also, having probably seen some of the corn that his neighbors had bought in that country.

Jacob, having lost his dear son Joseph, was now exceedingly careful of his younger son Benjamin, Joseph's very near brother, both having Rachel for their mother. He, therefore, sent down his other ten sons into Egypt, but kept Benjamin at home.

And Joseph's brethren "came and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." Now, you see that Joseph's dreams have come true. Oh, the wonderful ways of God! for, if his brethren had not sold him into Egypt, to prevent the dreamer from ever being among them, this had never happened.

Joseph knew his brethren; for they having been men when he saw them twenty-one years before, had not so altered in their faces as he had, who was then a lad, but had now become a man.

And Joseph remembered his dreams, and saw the wonderful providence of God in sending him into Egypt, where he was to save the lives of his starving family as well as of the Egyptians and other people, and where his brethren's sheaves bowed to his sheaf.

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And he treated them very roughly, still better to prevent them from knowing him, who was probably very meek and mild. And he charged them with being spies,—that is, with going to see how weak the people might be from want of food, and so intending to return and kill and plunder them, if all seemed to favor their plan; for the Arabs who live in those parts, even to this day, will spy out a weak town and drive out the people, and take their houses and goods, and live in it themselves.

Jacob's sons then told him who they were, to prove they were not spies; for no man would hazard the lives of ten sons on such a dangerous business, where they would lose their lives if they were found out. But they said the youngest son was left behind.

"That," said Joseph, "looks more suspicious: why was your father afraid to trust him with you, if you intended to do what was right?"

### Joseph's Brethren sent Home for Benjamin.

GENESIS XLII. 19, 20.

JOSEPH now told them that they must send one to fetch their youngest brother, and he would keep the rest till he returned with him; and he put them in prison for three days to think about it. But on the third day he let them all go but one, and he kept Simeon while they took home the corn, and till they brought back Benjamin, whom, as his own brother, he secretly wanted much to see.

Now their consciences began to wound them, and they recollected how they had used Joseph; and they talked to one another, and said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." "Ah," said Reuben, "did not I say, 'Do not sin against the child;' and ye would not hear?"

They, supposing Joseph to be an Egyptian, talked out loud in Hebrew; for Joseph, to conceal himself, got another to speak for him, who was called on this account an interpreter.

When Joseph heard how their hearts were pained, he turned aside and wept; and then, having recovered his courage, he "took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes."

Thus Providence put it into his power to punish the injustice and cruelty of his brethren; though you will see that after he had humbled

them, he treated them very kindly, and harbored no wicked revenge in his bosom.

Joseph next ordered their money to be put into their sacks; and they went home, leaving Simeon behind.

But one of them opened his sack to feed his ass, and finding his money, he was quite frightened lest he should be sent for back as a thief.

And when they got home, they told Jacob all that had happened; and as they all emptied their sacks, they all, to their great surprise, found their money there.

And when they told Jacob that Simeon was left behind and Benjamin must go back, the poor old man's heart was sadly grieved; and he said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

## Joseph's Brethren return to Egypt.

#### GENESIS XLIII.

THE famine still continued; and the last supply having been eaten, Jacob wished his sons to get some more corn.

They were ready to go; but then they could not go without Benjamin. This was very hard for poor Jacob; but at last he consented, and his dear Benjamin went also.

Then Jacob sent *presents* to Joseph,—for that is the way in which the favor of great men in the East is to be gained,—and he sent back the money found in the sacks, for he knew it did not belong to him; and good people are always honest; and he prayed to God to bless them, and sent them away.

When they got to Egypt Joseph provided a great feast for them, and they were sadly afraid on going to his house lest he should do them some

harm. Their fears were, however, soon quieted; for the steward spake kindly to them, and Joseph treated them as kindly.

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And now he asked after his good old father, for he was a tender-hearted son and loved him dearly. And when he saw his own brother Benjamin, born of the same mother, his heart was so full that he was obliged to go himself into his chamber and weep.

Having washed his tears away, he returned and ordered three tables to be spread: one for himself, as a great chief above all the rest; another for his brethren, to eat by themselves; and another for the Egyptians, that they might eat by themselves—for the Egyptians thought it an abomination, or that it would defile them, to eat bread with the Hebrews, because the Hebrews ate for food some creatures which they were so ignorant as to worship as gods.

Then Joseph having given orders, the eldest was put at the head of the table, and the youngest at the bottom—all in order according to their ages; and they all wondered how he could know so much about them; and all this time it never came into their thoughts that he might be Joseph. And, according to the custom of the country, Benjamin had five times more food set before him than any of the rest, having a greater variety of



PHARAOH II.

dishes for his choice; hence we sometimes say, when any one is helped largely, he has got Benjamin's mess; not that Benjamin was a glutton, and ate more than any of the rest, but Joseph gave him this mark of honor, as it was then thought, because he was not a half brother, but his own brother, whom he greatly loved.

So seeing Joseph behaved so kindly, they drank and were merry with him.

# The Cup in Benjamin's Sack.

#### GENESIS XLIV. 12.

JOSEPH'S brethren again prepared to depart, and Joseph ordered every man's money to be put again in his sack's mouth; and along with the money he ordered his silver drinking-cup to be put into Benjamin's sack.

As soon as the men were gone a little way he sent after them, and charged them with having stolen his cup. They were sure that they all knew too well what a crime it was to steal, and so they readily agreed to be searched, and that the thief should be made prisoner. The search was then made; and lo, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then, as was the custom in great grief, they tore their garments, and all of them went back.

When they came to Joseph, "they fell before him on the ground." And Joseph asked them if they supposed that they could cheat him? Did not they know that he was a very cunning man, and could divine or find out such things? Now Joseph did all this to try if his brethren could yet find him out, and Providence made these plans their punishment for their cruelty to their brother. He wanted, also, to detain Benjamin, and to try if they had any affection for his brother, or if they did not care about him, as they once proved they did not love him.

But Joseph had the pleasure to find that his brethren were truly sorry for what they had done. He knew they were innocent; yet they said, in remembrance of their past conduct, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants;" thinking that God was now reckoning with them. And at length Judah made a most beautiful and tender speech, which touched the heart of Joseph to the centre, and which we can scarcely read even now without tears.

## Joseph makes himself known to his Brethren.

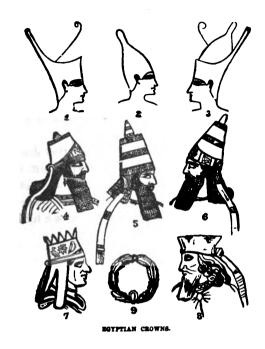
GENESIS XLV. 1-15.

JUDAH'S beautiful speech so overcame Joseph, that he was obliged to give way to his feelings, and to make himself known; and having ordered every one but his brethren instantly to leave his presence, he said, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." No wonder they were troubled at his presence. These were cutting words, but he soon softened them and quieted their fears. "Now, therefore," said he, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

How much of kindness and goodness was here! Joseph only wished his brethren to forgive themselves, for he had forgiven them.

And now he would have his father come and live near him, and all of them. "And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."

Now Pharaoh soon heard of this interesting meeting of Joseph and his





EGYPTIAN KING IN HIS CHARIOT.

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brethren; and as he greatly respected him, he desired that what he wished should be directly done: and he ordered Egyptian wagons to be sent into Canaan, to fetch the women and children of the old man, and promised them "the good of all the land of Egypt."

And Joseph gave presents of clothes to his brethren, and a large present of clothes to his brother Benjamin; and he sent corn, and bread, and meat, for his father; and dismissed his brethren with this good advice—"See that ye fall not out by the way."

And when they got home and told their father that Joseph was yet alive, he was some time before he could believe them; but when he saw the wagons, he knew that they were not theirs, and that they could not bring them away without leave, and then he said, "It is enough;"—I am satisfied;—"Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

## Jacob goes into Egypt.

GENESIS XLVI. 1-7.

GOOD old Jacob wished to be guided by Providence in all he did; and before he quite made up his mind to go down into Egypt, he went to Beersheba, and there he worshipped God. It was in his way, and it was a favorite place, for there Abraham and Isaac had worshipped God before him. (See Genesis xxi. 33; xxvi. 35.) And there God spake in some way, perhaps in a vision or dream,—for we know he can do all things,—and told Jacob to go down into Egypt, and that he and his should then prosper.

So Jacob and his family went down into Egypt, being in number three-score and ten, or seventy persons.

When they were near their journey's end, Judah was sent forward to tell Joseph that they were coming; "and Joseph made ready his chariot," being a great man, "and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen;"—for you remember that Israel was the name given to Jacob by the Angel that wrestled with him;—and he "presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while."

You see that Joseph did not neglect his good old father because he was "a plain man," while he himself was become a great man in the land of Egypt.

### Jacob before Pharaoh.

#### GENESIS XLVII.

JACOB and his family having arrived in Egypt, he and five of his sons were introduced by Joseph to the king, and Joseph having told them what to say about themselves,—that they were shepherds,—they told Pharaoh about their employment; for though Joseph could have got them greater honors, he thought that they would be much more happy in being by themselves, than among a people that did not worship the true God.

So Pharaoh ordered Joseph to give them the best land in Goshen to live in, where there was pasture for their flocks; and to make any of the most trustworthy, rulers of his cattle, or chiefs over his herdmen.

And when Jacob was introduced, he blessed Pharaoh, who had been so kind to his family. This was grateful. Jacob's blessing was the same as if he prayed for his welfare; and the prayers of such a good old man were no small returns for Pharaoh's kindness.

And then Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old art thou?" And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

"And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families." Thus you see how God brought good out of all the seeming evil that had happened to him.

And now the famine became very bad indeed, as Joseph, under divine direction, had foretold. And the people spent all their money to buy corn; and when that was gone, they exchanged their cattle for it; and when that was gone, they gave their lands and themselves as servants to Pharaoh, rather than perish for want. Now, Joseph was not cruel in taking their money, and cattle, and lands, and themselves; for he had bought up the corn in his granaries with Pharaoh's money, and it was Pharaoh's corn and not his to give away. And if the people had been wise, they would have laid up corn as well as Joseph; but as they did not fear God, they did not believe his servant, and so this distress came upon them. And as the property he gained was the king's, Joseph made no advantage of it: he kept none for himself, but only, like a faithful servant, gave it to Pharaoh; and then, at last, he restored the people their lands—only on condition that

they would give one-fifth of its produce to Pharaoh, to help him to preserve the state,—a kind of tax, somewhat more than is paid by farmers in America to keep up the state; and they may be happy enough if they please.

So you see how Pharaoh prospered through Joseph, and for being kind to Jacob.

After this Jacob lived seventeen years; and finding himself growing feeble, he thought upon dying and being buried, and he got Joseph to make him a solemn promise that he would take his body out of Egypt, and bury him with his fathers; for Canaan was a type or resemblance of heaven, being the land God had preserved for his peculiar people, and there he wished to rest in peace.

#### Jacob on his Death-bed.

#### GENESIS XLVIII., XLIX.

JACOB being about to die, Joseph went to comfort him, and to receive his blessing; and he took his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, with him, that he might bless them also.

Jacob blessed the two boys, crossing his hands as he did so, in such a way, that the right hand, which was supposed to convey the greater blessing, rested on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, prophesying that from him should come a multitude of nations.

Then he called all his sons together, and told them, being taught by God, what should happen to them in their latter days.

After he had done, he desired to be buried in the field which Abraham had bought of Ephron the Hittite,—the same field in which Abraham and Sarah were buried, and Isaac, and Rebekah, and Leah; there they were laid in a cave prepared on purpose for the family.

"And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, died and was buried with his fathers."

Jacob had not attained quite to the age of his father or grandfather, for Isaac was a hundred and eighty, and Abraham one hundred and seventy-five, while Jacob was only one hundred and forty-seven; but none of the patriarchs after him attained to his age.

#### Jacob's Funeral and Joseph's Death.

GENESIS L.

WHEN Joseph saw that Jacob was dead, he "fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." He had lost a kind and pious father, and such a friend is a loss indeed.

It was a custom with the Egyptians to embalm or preserve the bodies of their dead friends, by taking out their insides and salting them, and filling them with spices, which had the effect of keeping them from decaying for many hundreds of years; and after this the corpse was rolled up tightly in linen cloths, and generally put into a coffin of strong wood or stone, finely ornamented. Some had grand apartments prepared for them, where they were kept for many generations. Some of these bodies, called mummies, have been taken out of ancient tombs in Egypt, where they have been buried almost from the time of Joseph, and now, after more than three thousand years, are yet perfect, and to be seen in the museums in Europe and America. The whole time usually taken for embalming the body was seventy days; and while those days lasted, the Egyptians, out of respect to Joseph as well as Jacob's family, mourned for his loss, as when in some countries a king dies, everybody, out of respect, goes for a time into deep mourning.

When the seventy days were over, Joseph asked Pharaoh's leave to go into Canaan and bury his father, which Pharaoh readily granted. "And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the clders," or most honorable men, "of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company."

After the funeral, Joseph returned into Egypt. His brethren still feared his anger, knowing they deserved it, and supposed that he only withheld it till the death of his father, that he might not hurt the good old man's feelings. They therefore again implored Joseph's forgiveness, and pleaded that his father wished them so to do; and this might be true, for he, perhaps, thought they could not too much humble themselves, for the wicked act of selling their own brother. Joseph then repeated his pardon, and said to them, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? Ask pardon of

God for your sin, but I will not take vengeance: besides, he overruled your cruelty for good. As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

Joseph was a chief man in Egypt for eighty years; for he was thirty years old when he was raised to his honors, and he died at an hundred and ten years old,—being the shortest-lived of all the patriarchs. Perhaps this was partly owing to his living the life of a courtier, which was less hardy, and therefore not so healthy as that of a shepherd. However, when he died, he had great-grandchildren to remember his name with respect; and what was better than all, he died in faith, believing in a joyful resurrection and a promised Messiah.



# Exodus.

This word signifies "the departure," or going out; and it is given to this book because it describes the circumstances under which the children of Israel departed from Egypt to go to the land of Canaan. Of course it also furnishes many incidents and events preceding and following that remarkable migration. The book was written by Moses, as he himself says in Ex. xxiv. 4, and as our Saviour says in Mark xii. 26, and Luke xx. 37. The object of it was to show the great deliverance God gave his chosen people; the great importance of public and constant worship; the real source of all true worship, as well as our near relationship to that source; and the fulfilment of the promises God had made to Abraham. The book contains forty chapters, and may be divided into, first, the circumstances of the deliverance; and, second, the giving of the law, and the complete organization of the nation.

#### The Children of Israel in Bondage.

Exodus I.

FTER the death of Joseph, and of all his brethren, and of all the people that lived in the time of his greatness, another king reigned, called also Pharaoh, that being a general name for a king in Egypt.

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."

Pharaoh was jealous on this account, and he burdened the Israelites with heavy taxes, and made them work for him at brick-making, and

build his cities; and it is supposed by some that he made them build the famous pyramids, or huge monuments, which remain to this day in Egypt among the greatest wonders of the world; and he set over them taskmasters, or men to overlook them and see that they kept hard at work. By so doing he kept them very poor, for they had not time to labor for them-



ISBARLITES MAKE OF BUILDRE IN LOTTE

selves, and he tried to wear them out with slavery, that he might lessen

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their numbers; "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew."

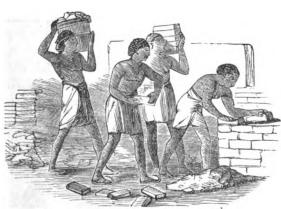
So the king thought upon another plan to destroy them, and ordered all the little boys of the Hebrews to be drowned in the river Nile, as soon as they were born: but the Hebrew women, to whom he gave the orders, feared to commit murder, and God blessed them for it, and protected them, so that Pharaoh did them no harm for not obeying him.

### The Birth and wonderful Preservation of Moses.

Exodus II.

ABOUT this time God gave a son to a man of the house of Levi, that is, one descended from Levi, one of Joseph's brethren; probably a grandson of Levi's, for it was only thirty-five years after Joseph's death.

Besides the love his mother had for him, as her son, she was struck with



ISRABLITES MAKING BRICKS IN EGYPT.

his great beauty, and she hid him for three months that she might save him from being drowned.

At last it is thought that Pharaoh sent spies to search out for all the little Hebrew babes that were boys; and Moses's mother, when she could no longer hide him, took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the

child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. The ark means a boat, and the bulrushes were a sort of strong tall reed which grows on the banks of the Nile, the wood of which was tied together in little bundles; and these little bundles were again tied together, till enough were so tied as to make a boat of nearly the same shape as we could make it of wood. The slime and the pitch were to keep the water from getting into it, that it might not sink. The Egyptians made all their boats this way, till they found out a better method. Moses's mother perhaps knew the spot which

Pharach's daughter used to visit, and might have hoped to move her to pity by his helplessness, and innocency, and beauty; and, being directed by Divine Providence, the poor little babe was put there, "and his sister, Miriam, stood afar off, to wit," or observe, "what would be done to him."

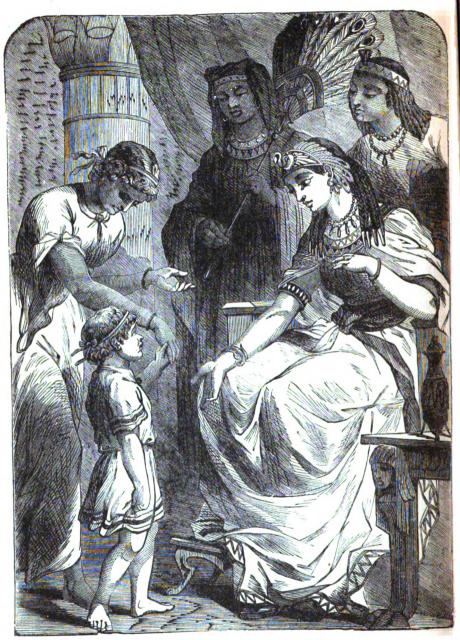
"And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself," or, as some exppose, to wash her clothes, "at the river," which was then no disgrace even to a king's daughter; "and her maidens" that attended upon her "walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark," or little reed boat, "among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children."

His sister drawing near, as if to see what was found, but not daring to tell whose child it was, said "to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it." So he was restored to his mother's bosom. "And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." She called him such, and brought him up as if he had been her own. "And she called his name Moses:" which means, drawn out, "and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

And now Moses having been taken under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter, was brought up as a prince; and being very clever, he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who were at that time the most learned people in the world; so that, both from natural talents, as well as from extraordinary divine help, he was well qualified to write the first five books of the Bible, of which books he was the author, and some have thought that he also wrote Job. History likewise reports, that he was a great general, and the New Testament says, he was mighty in words and in deeds; and this helped to make him a leader and deliverer.

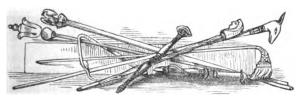
God early touched the heart of Moses with pity to his burthened countrymen, and he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," who were his people, and whom God had promised to bless.

From the New Testament, Acts vii. 23, we learn that "when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and



MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.

avenged him that was oppressed,"—that is, he took his part,—and smote the Egyptian, and hid his body in the sand. This would have been a wicked act; but Moses was divinely taught to do this as a pledge of his smiting the armies of Egypt, and saving the Israelites from their cruel enemies; and "he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not."



ANCIENT SCEPTRES.

The next day he found two Hebrews quarrelling, and wishing to prevent them from hurting one another, he asked the one who struck the first blow, why he struck his brother. He answered with another question, "Who made thee a ruler and judge over us? Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses, on hearing this, wondered how the thing was known; but it soon came to the ears of Pharaoh, who sent in search of him, that he might have him killed. Moses, therefore, escaped into Midian, a country a great way off, beyond the Red Sea.

Moses, perhaps wearied with his journey, sat himself down by a well, the traveller's usual place of rest, at that time, and long after.

"Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away;" and after they had been at the trouble of drawing the water, they used it for their own flocks.

Moses was a brave man, who loved to defend the weak against the strong; a just man, who loved to do that which was right; and a good man, who delighted in doing good; he therefore boldly "stood up and helped" the priest's daughters, and even watered their flocks.

When the young women got home, their father wondered how they had done so soon; and they told him how kind Moses had been; and he sent to invite him to his house, and made much of him; and he gave him his daughter, or perhaps granddaughter, for his wife, for the name of the Priest was Ruel, but Jethro was the name of Moses's father-in-law, and he was probably a son of Ruel's.

## Moses and the Burning Bush.

Exodus III. 1-6.

MOSES was employed as a shepherd, and he kept the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock into the desert, and came to the mountain of Horeb.

Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him, all covered with glory like fire, and he was in the midst of a bush. Moses wondered how the bush could be all in flames, and yet not consumed.

But this had a meaning in it; and it taught him, by an emblem or sign, that as that bush had the angel of the Lord shining in it, so God is in the midst of his church or people, who are often so called; and though they in danger may look like the bush likely to be burnt, yet they shall never be destroyed. So did the Israelites appear in Egypt, like this bush, exposed to destroying flames, and so has the Church of God often appeared since; but God has always safely preserved it.

Moses would have gone nearer to the bush to see the wonderful sight, but the voice of God spoke from it, and calling him by name, commanded him not to go any nearer, and to pull off his shoes as a mark of reverence, as we take off our hats in the time of divine service; for the place on which he stood was holy ground.

Then God told him how his poor countrymen, the Israelites, were oppressed, and that he would send him to be their deliverer, and that they should yet possess a land flowing with milk—that is, full of fine grass for cattle, the eating of which would fill them with milk—and full also of honey—that is, flowers in abundance, from which the bees should gather honey more than in any other part of the world; both of which were true of Canaan.

But Moses knew that to save his people was quite out of his power, and he inquired how it could come to pass.

And God told him to go into Egypt, and to speak to the elders, or old men and chiefs of Israel, and that they should mind what he said; and that they should all go to the king of Egypt, and ask leave to go and offer sacrifices to their God in the wilderness—a distance that would take them a journey of three days, for instead of measuring distance by miles in those times, they always measured by the time a journey took; but they did not travel near so fast as we commonly do in this country.

God also told Moses that the king of Egypt would not let them go at first, but he would make him do so; and the Egyptians should at last be glad to let them go, and even give up their gold and silver for their use, which should be a just payment for all the hard labor that they had forced the Israelites to perform, without paying them for it.

### Moses performs Miracles, and goes with Aaron to the Israelites.

Exodus IV. 1-9.

MOSES now wanted to do some wonderful thing before the Israelites, such as could not be done by common skill, but only by the great power of God, and which we call *miracles*. These would prove that he was

no impostor or cheat, and that God had really commanded him to become the deliverer of Israel, when he enabled him to do these things.

Then God commanded him to throw down a rod which he held in his hand, and it became a serpent. Then again he told him to take it up by the tail, and it became a rod. He also told him to put his hand into his bosom, and when he pulled it out it was leprous—something like a person covered with the scurvy, or smallpox, but much worse; and then he told him to put his hand into his bosom again; when he pulled it out it was well.



THE KERPENT.

God also told him, that if these miracles would not prove that he had sent him, he should perform more, and he should turn some of the water of the river Nile into blood.

Moses then complained that he could not speak well; but God asked him, who made his mouth? and he could make him speak well.

Still he did not like to go, till God was displeased with him for his uniclief, and he told him that Aaron his brother should speak for him.

So Moses went to his father-in-law, and asked his leave to go into Egypt; and he took his family with him, and his rod in his hand.

And God, by some secret power, impressed Aaron's mind with the thought that he must go and meet Moses.

And when Moses had told Aaron all that had happened, they went together to the elders of Israel.

Moses applies to Pharaoh.—Pharaoh's Obstinacy and Cruelty.

Exorts v.

MOSES and Aaron now went to Pharaoh, and asked leave for the Israelites to go and worship in the wilderness. But Pharaoh knew nothing of the God of Israel, and he asked, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" And he charged Moses and Aaron with making the people discontented; and he desired that their work should be heavier, and that they should make the same number of bricks as before, but instead of having straw served out to them they should get it where they could; for they used straw to make the clay of the bricks stick faster together; and some of the bricks made at that time have been found in very ancient ruins in Egypt, and are kept by those who are curious in such things, and in these are straw with the clay. So the people wandered about the corn-fields to get stubble instead of good straw; and this took up so much time, that they could not make the number of bricks they were ordered to make.



EGYPTIAN BRICK-MAKING KILNS.

Then Pharaoh ordered the Israelitish officers to be beaten, probably by striking them hard on the soles of the feet—a cruel punishment, used in Egypt, called being bastinadoed. And when they complained to Pharaoh, he said, "Ye are idle, ye are idle;" and told them to go to their work.

And Moses entreated the Lord in behalf of the poor Israelites.

Beginning of the Ten Plagues of Egypt.—The Plague of Blood.

Exodus vii.

OD now permitted Pharaoh's stubbornness and obstinacy to remain, and did not directly cut him off, that he might afterwards show his great power over those who dare to resist his will. This is what is meant

by his hardening Pharaoh's heart; and not that he made him wicked, for God never does any wicked thing; he is too good to do evil.

Moses was now eighty years of age, and Aaron was eighty-three, when they stood before Pharaoh.

Now, as Pharaoh would require some proof of their coming from God with their demand to let the Israelites go, Moses and Aaron were desired to use their rod, which perhaps had been Moses's shepherd's crook.

So when they came before Pharaoh, they did as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Then God determined to afflict Egypt with great plagues.

The first was the plague of blood, which lasted about seven days. The Egyptians were such stupid idolaters that they worshipped beasts, birds, insects, and even things without life, as the river Nile, to which they sacrificed a boy or a girl every year. To show them how stupid it was, Moses was commanded to go to the river when Pharaoh went there, perhaps to bathe or to pay it some honors,—and to smite the waters with his rod, and they should become blood, and the fish should die and the river stink, and the Egyptians nauseate the very water they were used to adore and which is the most delicious and the most refreshing in the world. And when Moses smote the waters, all the waters in the rivers and ponds, and even in the vessels in the houses, became blood. "And there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." Perhaps God here designed to punish the Egyptians for their cruelty in having drowned so many poor helpless Hebrew infants in the Nile. The Egyptians then dug wells and got good water: so Pharaoh still remained obstinate, and would not let the people go.

# The Plagues of Frogs, of Lice, and of Flies

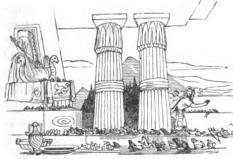
Exodus viii.

Pharaoh would not let the people go, the Lord commanded Moses to threaten him with a second plague, which should be frogs.

There was no need that in this case new frogs should be created, for there were heaps of them in the muddy bed of the Nile, grown and in spawn; and a miracle would be plain enough to be seen if all the young ones were brought at once to life and the whole covered the land as Moses said. And now what he said to Pharaoh came to pass—"And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: and the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants."

You will wonder, perhaps, how the frogs could get into the ovens; but the Egyptian ovens were only earthen pots sunk into the ground, into which they put their dough, and covered it with fire, and so baked it into bread. Here, when the fire was out, the frogs would easily fill the ovens.

Pharaoh was obliged to ask Moses to pray to God that he would remove them. Moses did so; but Pharaoh still remained obstinate, and



PLAGUE OF FROOS.

would not let Israel go, though the miracle remained before his eyes; "and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank."

God then brought a third plague upon Egypt. Aaron at his command "stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the

dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt."

The magicians tried to imitate this plague; but God bounded their power, and they could not do it. Then they said, "This is the finger of God." Some learned men think this plague was an insect called the tick, which is flat and round, and is worse than the noxious vermin called lice; as it thrusts its little head and body into the flesh, and will not come out till it is torn in two, and dreadfully torments the body on which it fastens.

This plague did not answer the purpose; so a day or two after God threatened Pharaoh again: and as he would not obey him, "there came a grievous swarm of *flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies."

Many persons probably died of this fourth plague,—being stung to death and having their bodies inflamed and thrown into a fever by these venomous little insects, which they could not escape; for it is said in the seventy-eighth Psalm, when speaking of this plague, "He sent divers sorts of flies among them which devoured them."

All the time that these plagues existed the Israelites in Goshen were free from them,—a proof that God's care was over them.

Pharaoh now offered to let the people go, but he did not wish them to go far, and he begged of Moses to pray that the flies might be removed. But when this was done he again refused to let the people go.

#### The Plagues of Murrain, of Boils and Blains, and of Rain, Hail and Fire.

#### Exodus ix.

IT was very foolish as well as very wicked for Pharaoh to contend against the LORD God, for he can do everything. So he sent a fifth plague, and caused a disease among the cattle of the Egyptians, and "all the cattle of Egypt died,"—that is, all the cattle that the disease killed were belonging to Egypt, for some were afterwards killed in other ways;—"but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one."

But Pharaoh was yet hardened. God, therefore, sent a sixth plague; it was "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt." Moses and Aaron, at God's command, "took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up towards heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians." The ashes from the furnaces of the brick-kilns were thus turned into a righteous punishment, for the cruel treatment of the Israelites by the Egyptians.

This was followed by a seventh plague of hail, fire, and thunder. The people were warned of the danger, and cautioned not to go themselves, nor to leave out their cattle in the fields, for the hail should come down upon them and they should die. "And he that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: and he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants

and his cattle in the field." And now again "Moses stretched forth his rod towards heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground." And "all that was in the field," man and beast, and herb and tree, perished. "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail."

Pharaoh was now sadly frightened, and sent for Moses and begged him to pray to God to stop the "mighty thunderings and hail;" but when they were over, Pharaoh again would not let the people go.

### The Plagues of Locusts and Darkness.

Exodus x.

OD now threatened Pharaoh with the plague of locusts, which was the eighth plague.

So Moses stretched out his rod, and the Lord sent a wind that brought locusts with it, and "they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the



fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."

Perhaps you do not know what locusts are. We will tell you. They are like a large grasshopper, with wings of a green color. They travel in such large bodies, that they obscure the light of the sun like a cloud. Wherever they alight, they devour faster than caterpillars; after a visit of locusts, the leaves of every herb and tree disappear, and look as if a fire had destroyed them. When they lay their eggs, they produce worms or caterpillars; and these are dreadfully destructive. They crawl in immense bodies or numbers united. The people try to stop them with fires, and trenches with water in them; but they march on over one another's bodies till they find a passage, and by their numbers they put out the fire and fill up the water-trenches. They are often the means of destroying crops in the East, and within the past few years they have eaten up every green thing in several of our Western States.

Well, these terrible insects, as we have said, visited the Egyptians, and destroyed all their fields, and entered into all their houses; and it was such

a visit of locusts as neither they, nor their fathers, nor their fathers' fathers had seen.

Then Pharaoh again "called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only."

As Moses was a good man, he took no pleasure in Pharaoh's punishment, and he prayed to God even for his enemy, as good men do. "And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

Well, surely Pharaoh would now let the children of Israel go. No; he

would not. So God told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven, that there might be "darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt;" supposed to have been a very thick mist or fog; and it lasted three days, so that the people saw not one another, neither did they rise from the place where they were. They were so frightened, that they knew not what to do; and if the darkness was caused by a damp mist or fog, it would put out every fire and every light, which, no doubt, it did. This was the mith plaque.



But while this plague lasted, the part where the children of Israel lived was free from it, for "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

Destruction of the First-born of Egypt, and Release of the Children of Israel.

Exodus xi., xii.

THE tenth and last plague was about to fall upon Pharaoh, and a most terrible plague it was.

"And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out

into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."

This plague was the most alarming of all. "And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead."

In Egypt, when any died, the people ran into the streets, and howled, and showed their grief in the strongest manner. What a scene of distress must there have been in the streets, when some from every house ran out and cried!

Pharaoh was now convinced that it was in vain to fight against God, and was, probably, afraid for his own life, and for the lives of all his people.



EGYPTIAN WOMEN.

So "he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds,

as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men."

So the children of Israel went away in so much haste, that they even carried their dough with them that was mixed for their bread, without having time to bake it. And having been cheated out of their wages for their hard labor, they borrowed, or rather asked, for some silver and gold from the Egyptians,—for they would not at God's command have borrowed without intending to pay; and the people, glad to get rid of them, in their fright gave them jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.

In memory of this great event, God established what is called the Pass-over.

On the evening when the first-born were to be slain, a lamb was to be killed by each Israelitish family, who were to cat its flesh with bitter herbs, in remembrance of their bitter bondage in Egypt. The lamb's blood was ordered to be sprinkled on the lintel of each door, or that part which is over our heads when we enter; and also on the door posts; and when the destroying angel, or the stroke of death, should visit the Egyptians, not a single injury should happen to those whose doors were so sprinkled.

This Pass-over, as it was called, because in that night God's wrath should pass over the houses of the Israelites, was also to show how those should escape Divine wrath who should by faith be sprinkled, as it were, with the blood of Jesus Christ, who is called "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

## The Departure of the Children of Israel from Egypt, and the Drowning of Pharaoh and his Army in the Red Sea.

Exodus xIII., xIV.

AND now the children of Israel set off to leave Egypt. There were six hundred thousand men on foot, and with the Levites, who were not reckoned in that number, and also their wives and children, it is supposed the whole were above three millions. This was indeed a large body.

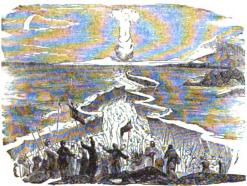
And as they were commanded to travel in the wilderness, a wild and dreary place, where they might lose their way, and fall into the hands of enemies, they were guided by a cloud in the air, which was of the shape of a pillar, and which at night was light on their side, but dark on the other.

<sup>\*</sup> These were all of military age, above twenty years old, and so were about one-fifth of the whole.

By this cloud they were guided, when Pharaoh repented of letting them go, and said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them;" "and he pursued after the children of Israel." And he overtook them encamping, or resting in their tents, by the sea. On both sides were mountains and strong towers, so that, with his army behind them, they had no way of escape but through the sea; and how could they get through the sea without ships, while they had not so much as even a boat with them?

Pharaoh now thought that they were "entangled in the land," and that "the wilderness had shut them in."

The children of Israel, too, were alarmed, and forgot what great things



ISRAELITES CROSSING THE RED SEA.

God had done for them, and they began to cry out against Moses, and to say to him, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Moses had more faith in God, and he said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to

you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." The same God who had wrought all those miracles for their deliverance in Egypt, and had compelled Pharaoh to let them go, was still their protector, and would prevent their oppressor from destroying them.

And now God ordered Moses to lift up his rod, and stretch his hand out to the sea, and the children of Israel should "go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

The cloud began to move, and the children of Israel were commanded to go forward. And the cloud came between the camp of Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, but it gave light by night to the Israelites; so that the one came not near to the

other all night. And the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Travellers have observed, that at the part where the Israelites crossed, the sea is about twelve miles over, and about twenty-eight yards deep, or about nine or ten times as high as a room usually is. Some have thought that the strong wind blew up the water and cleared a channel, as we may do with our breath in a saucer of water; but then others wisely think that so strong a wind as must have raised so much water, would have blown all the people away; beside, the waters would never have stood as a wall, but have returned often to their place, and have drowned the Israelites: it is therefore plain that God wrought another miracle to deliver them, and the wind was, probably, used to dry up the bottom of the sea, that they might walk better on it.

"And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Probably Pharaoh went on in the dark, and did not know where he was until he found out his danger. "And it came to pass that in the morning watch," which was from about three o'clock in the morning till six, when the watchmen on the towers were changed, "the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians." Probably a storm gathered in the cloud, and it might thunder and lighten; for in the Psalms it is said, when this deliverance is named, "The voice of thy THUNDER was in the heavens, the LIGHTNINGS LIGHTENED the world, the earth TREMBLED and SHOOK."—(See the 77th Psalm.) And the Lord "took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily:" for by the storm he so terrified the drivers, that they, perhaps, ran against one another, and broke each other's chariots to pieces; and, besides, the bottom of the sea might again become wet and heavy, so that the chariots could not go forward without violent dragging and breaking.

· And now the Egyptians saw their danger, and said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians."

At this moment God commanded Moses again to stretch his hand over the sea, and the waters should return: and he did so, and all the army of Egypt was drowned.

God could have done all this without Moses using his rod, but he would by this teach him to obey his commands, and then all would be well with him, and God would have Israel respect Moses as his servant and their leader.

The morning showed a most fearful sight, for the shores were strewed with dead bodies and wrecks: there remained not so much as one Egyptian.

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses."

# The Israelites fed with Manna.

Exodus xvi. 11-15.

THIS wonderful deliverance ought to have made the children of Israel trust in the God who had thus rescued them, for all the future, but they were a faithless, fretful people, ever ready to murmur against God.

Israel seemed unwilling to trust God for their daily bread; and when their supply ran short, after leaving Egypt, they began to be angry at Moses again. And they said to Moses and Aaron, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots;" where, probably, their food as slaves was cooked in a large quantity, under the eyes of their task-masters; "and," they added, "when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

God is long-suffering, and instead of punishing the ungrateful people, he said unto Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

So in the evening God used to cause a great quantity of a bird called a quail, something like a partridge, to cover the camp, which the Israelites caught; and in the morning a white-looking small thing, as small as hoar frost, covered the ground when the dew had left it. This food was more wonderful than the regular coming of large flights of quails. The people had never seen anything like it, and they cried out "Man hu?" "What is this?" from which some think it got the name manna; though others suppose it means a portion, as there was a Hebrew word like it with this meaning. Every one who was able was to gather this food before the sun had risen, or it would be melted; and when it was put into one heap, it was



ESTPTIAN KING IN HIS CHARIOT.

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divided among the people, allowing an omer, which was about three quarts, for each person's use for the day. This was put into a mortar and bruised, or ground in a mill, and then made into bread. God caused this to fall six days in the week; but on the sixth day, they were to gather for two days, 'as they were not to expect any on the Sabbath; for on that day they were to do no manner of work; and though it bred worms, and was unfit to eat, if kept for two days at any other time, yet it was always good on the Sabbath.

It is reckoned that the Hebrew camp wanted not less than ninety-four thousand four hundred and sixty-six bushels of this food every day; and that in the whole of the forty years that they were travelling about in the wilderness, they must have consumed one thousand three hundred and seventy million two hundred and three thousand six hundred bushels!

In remembrance of this miracle, the Lord commanded Moses to fill ar omer measure of it, which we just told you was about three quarts, and to keep it in a pot for future generations; that is, the children and children's children of Israel, from one hundred years to another—that they might see the bread with which God fed them in the wilderness when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. This was laid up in the ark; and its preservation was another miracle, as, without that, it would have bred worms, and become corrupt as the rest when kept.

God provided thus from day to day, to teach Israel to look to him for their daily bread, and, in like manner, we must look and ask for ours from God.

This manna coming down from heaven to keep Israel alive, reminds us that Jesus Christ came down from heaven, who is the bread of life; and that whoever, by faith, looks to him for salvation, believing that he is both able and willing to save his soul forever, shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Moses smites the Rock.—Israel defeats the Amalekites.

Exodus xvII.

WHEN shall we hear the last of Israel's murmurings? Here they are murmuring again at a place called Rephidim. They wanted water, and chided Moses, and said, "Give us water that we may Jrink." "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"



Was not this very provoking, after all that had been done for them? Well, a patient God still bore with them, and ordered Moses to take his rod and smite the rock in Horeb; and to show them that it was a miracle, water should instantly gush out from this hard rock. "And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

The Apostle Paul says, "This rock was Christ:" he does not mean Christ himself, but that it resembled Christ, who, as he lives forever, is sometimes called a *Rock*, as a rock is one of the most lasting things in the world; and it is from him flows all true happiness, which is, to the mind or soul of man, as refreshing as the streams of water were, flowing from the rock to the Israelites in the wilderness. (John vii. 37.)

The Israelites had now a real cause of trouble; for a people, called the Amalekites, came upon them in the wilderness, intending to kill them, and rob them of all their cattle and whatever else they possessed. But again God appeared to save them. Joshua was a brave man, and Moses desired him to choose out men, and go out and fight with the Amalekites. And Moses, and Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of a hill; and there Moses held up the rod of God in his hand, and no doubt prayed to God that he would save Israel from their enemies. And when his hands grew tired with holding them up, then Aaron and Hur supported them; "and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."

Probably the arms cast ashore from the Red Sea, after the Egyptians were drowned, were those which were used to beat off the Amalekites; and if so, God overruled the wickedness of one enemy to prevent that of another.

This was a cruel and unjust attack of Amalek upon the Israelites, and God punished them by their shameful defeat; and he also swore that he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and that he would "utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek." When it is said God hath sworn, it means that he speaks very solemnly, and with a fixed resolution; and it always deserves particular notice, for it relates to something very important. And in the fifteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel you will read of the fulfilment of this threat, when the Amalekites having become so wicked that they were a curse to the earth on which they lived, God told King Saul to "go and utterly destroy the SINNERS, the Amalekites."

# The Giving of the Law.

Exodus xx.

ABOUT three months after God had delivered his people from the tyrant Pharaoh, he spake to Moses, and desired him to remind them of the great favors he had bestowed upon them; and to tell them that if they would obey his voice, and keep his covenant or agreement that he



THE GIVING OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

would make with them, then he would always do them good, and he would keep them with as much care as a man would keep his treasures of silver and gold, and they should be a particular nation sacred to his service.

Moses told the Israelites what God had said to him. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

Then Moses having returned the words of the people unto the Lord, he was ordered to warn them to be ready by holy and solemn preparation, such as washing their clothes, as a sign of putting off everything that was impure, and in three days he would come down and show his glory in the sight of all of them upon Mount Sinai, which is a mountain in Arabia.

He also ordered Moses to set

bounds to keep the people from going too near to the foot of the mountain; as every one who touched even its borders should die.

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the

Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly."

And God spake all the words of his commandments, and from the Mount they were heard by all the people.

These commandments are ten in number.

The first is against idolatry, and teaches us to love nothing more than God.

The second is against worshipping images for God.

The third is against cursing and swearing.

The fourth is against Sabbath-breaking, and idleness in the other days of the week.

The fifth is against disrespect and disobedience to parents.

The sixth is against murder: he that HATETH his brother is a murderer.

The seventh is against everything that is indecent in word or behavior.

The eighth is against stealing and cheating.

The ninth forbids false stories about our neighbors, and tending to do them harm, by making people think badly of them.

The tenth commandment is against covetousness, or desiring what does not belong to us.

# Laws given to the Israelites by Moses.

Exodus xxi., xxii., xxiii.

IN these chapters there are a great many laws which God told Moses to command the Israelites to keep.

We have also some commands given to the Hebrews to keep several feasts.

In the twenty-third chapter, and the fourteenth and following verses, God commands the Hebrews, "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year."

The first feast was the feast of unleavened bread, or the Pass-over, to remind them of their great deliverance out of Egypt. Then they were to kill a lamb and feast on it; to call to mind how God saved them by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb on their door-posts, on the night when he slew all the first-born in Egypt; and pious men would, by faith, look for salvation in Jesus Christ, who is called the "Lamb of God," when God shall destroy the wicked world in the last day. Part of the time of this feast they were to eat unleavened bread, as they did when they escaped from

Egypt. The first day was, indeed, properly the Passover, and seven days following, the feast of unleavened bread. This bread not being pleasant to the taste, was to remind the Israelites how bitter was their bondage in Egypt when God delivered them.

When this feast was kept, the children would often ask what it meant, and they were answered, "Children, we were all servants, like this maid-servant, or this man-servant who waiteth"—pointing to some servant in the family,—"and on this night, many years ago, the Lord redeemed us and brought us to liberty;" and he who sat at the head of the table returned thanks, and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, King everlasting, who hast redeemed us, and redeemed our fathers out of Egypt, and brought us to this night to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs."

Another yearly feast of the Hebrews was the Feast of Harvest, sometimes called the Feast of Weeks, but better known by the name of The Feast of Pentecost. The Jews then offered thanks to God for the bounties of the harvest, in bread baked of the new corn. On that day, too, they celebrated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. This feast was kept fifty days after the Passover.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the third great feast. This was sometimes called The Feast of Tents, and The Feast of the In-gathering. This feast was to call to memory the way in which Israel lived when God protected them in the wilderness, in movable tents or tabernacles, something like what you see put up sometimes in gardens, to screen people from wet and I eat, or in fields at fairs, or reviews. This feast, like the Passover, lasted for a week, during which time the people all lived in booths or arbors, made of the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook. This feast, being at the close of harvest, was also a yearly thanksgiving for God's goodness in giving them an opportunity of getting it in.

### The Tabernacle, its Furniture, and Priests.

Exodus xxv. 8, 9.

MOSES told all the people the laws of God, and they promised, "all the words which the Lord hath said we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words in a book, called the book of the covenant or agreement,

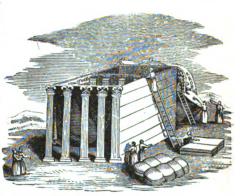
and he made offerings to God, and he took of the blood of the sacrifices and sprinkled on the people, which was an understood sign that they solemnly engaged to keep their promise to God, and that if they did so, God would do everything for their good.

After this Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up Mount Sinai, and the glory of God shone very brightly about them. And God commanded Moses to go up into the mountain, and he would give him the commandments written on stone. So Moses went up into the Mount, and he was there forty days and forty nights. All this time he neither ate nor drank, but God kept him alive.

God now showed Moses the pattern by which he was to make a Taber-

nacie in the wilderness, in which to worship him. This was to differ from the Temple which was afterwards built in Canaan, as the Tabernacle was a kind of very grand tent, to move about from place to place as the Israelites moved; but the Temple was a fixed building, like any one of our churches.

For the building of the Tabernacle, and the making of different articles to be used in it, the people were to give gold and silver, and orass; and fine linen of blue, pur-



THE ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE.

ple, and scarlet colors, and skins of animals and wood; and also oil, and spices for making incense; and precious stones to be worn by the high priest.

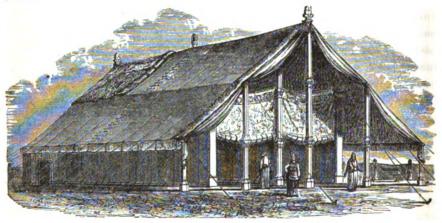
The people brought their offerings in the most liberal manner; and Moses soon got more money and things than he wanted, so that he was obliged to restrain them from giving him anything more.

The value of the gold and silver only, which was used for the work, was equal to nine hundred and twelve thousand, eight hundred and forty dollars, and reckoning the difference of values, was more than six million dollars.

The Tabernacle was long and narrow. Its length was about fifty-five feet, its breadth ten, and its height ten—that is, almost twice as high as a man. Its two sides, and one end, were made of a very durable

wood, called acacia wood; and they were overlaid with thin plates of gold, and fixed in solid sockets of silver. At the top of the sides were rings of gold; and bars of wood, overlaid with gold, ran through these rings at each side, and held the boards upright. At the entrance were five pillars of the same wood, ornamented with gold and fixed in sockets of brass. A richly-worked curtain hung on these pillars.

For its ceiling, there was a covering of fine linen, magnificently embroidered or worked in needle-work, with figures called cherubim, which it is not easy to explain. The colors of the work were blue, purple, and scarlet. On this ceiling was laid an outside covering, made of goats' hair; then upon that another covering of rams' skins, dyed red; and a fourth covering was outside, to bear the weather; this was made of some other skins.



THE TAEERNACLE RESTORED.

This Tabernacle was divided into two apartments. The partition was made by four pillars of the same wood as the rest, and overlaid with gold: and these stood in sockets of silver put in the ground, and on these pillars was hung a veil or curtain richly worked.

One part, at the further end, was for the *Most Holy Place*, where the people could not enter, but only the priest; and the part as large again as that remained for the people.

This Tabernacle stood in a large court surrounded with pillars of brass, ornamented with silver; and all around there hung upon them curtains of fine twined white linen yarn, with cords to draw them up when necessary.

Within this square stood an altar for offering burnt-offerings, or offerings in which the animals offered were burnt, and there was also a laver for holding water, for the priests to wash themselves.

Having told you about this grand structure, I will now tell you about the rich and curious furniture which was put in it, as God commanded Moses.

In the Holy Place there was an altar of incense, on which incense was burnt morning and evening; which teaches us to pray to God morning and evening, and our prayers will, if sincere, and offered in the name of Christ, ascend up before God, as sweet incense or perfumed smoke ascends in the air. This altar was made of acacia wood, and completely covered with plates of gold. It had four rings of the same precious metal, into which poles were put to carry it from one place to another. There was also the table for the shew-bread. It had its dishes, spoons, covers and bowls, all made of pure gold. The bread was made every week; and the priests had that which was taken away every Sabbath day, as a part of their reward for their services. Its quality was of the finest kind, being made of the best wheaten flour.

There were twelve cakes, being the number of the tribes of Israel; these were piled up in two equal rows, and pure frankincense, a sweet perfume, put upon each row. The meaning of this bread, and the things about it, seems to have been, that God by his presence dwelt there; and though he need not eat as his creatures, yet these things were the signs of a dwelling place, by which the Israelites were to understand he was amongst them. There was also the golden candlestick, which had seven branches for lights, and ornaments beautifully worked in the shape of flowers, and was worth about thirty thousand dollars of our money.

The lamps of this were lighted every evening, and put out every morning. As there were no windows to the Tabernacle, this light was much needed. It was also a sign of that Holy Spirit, which now shines into the mind to give it divine light; and when Christ sent his Spirit, that light, as a sign, was needed no more. So, seventy years after Christ, Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans; and there is a large stone archway still at Rome which was built in memory of that conquest; and, among the figures cut out on stone as taken from the Jews, is this candlestick, the table of shewbread, and some other things—so that the shapes of the table and of the candlestick are well known to this day, and they are as the Lord commanded Moses. See how far back, and exactly, we can trace the correctness of the history of the Book of God, although it is so very old.



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There were three things also very remarkable in the Most Holy Place, where the high priests went. First, the ark. This was a chest of the usual wood, overlaid within and without with pure gold. It had also gold rings to put staves or poles through, to carry it. Inside this ark were tables, or inscriptions on stone, of the covenant with God; a golden pot with some manna, to be kept in remembrance of God's feeding Israel, when that food would be wanted no more; and also Aaron's wonderful rod. There was a covering to the ark made of pure gold, called the mercy-seat, where God showed, by signs of his glory, that he would be merciful to his people; and upon this were placed what were called the cherubim, or figures with wings. We do not exactly know what these meant.

One more subject you will find in these chapters connected with the Temple, which was the robes of the priests.

God commanded Moses—"Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister to me in the priest's office."

There was to be a breastplate, in which twelve precious stones were set in four rows; they were very brilliant, and of different colors, and on these were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Also, an ephod; the common priests had it made plain of cloth, but the high priest's was richly worked. This was a garment to cover the back and front of the body only, to be fastened to the shoulders by two precious stones; and a robe, or upper coat, which was under the ephod, that, perhaps, fastening it down: round the hem at the bottom of this garment there were a number of gold bells, to ring when the priest went into the Holy Place. And under this robe, next to the body, like a shirt, was to be what is called "a broidered coat." And further, on his head there was to be a mitre or turban, something like what is worn by the Turks instead of hats. A girdle was to go round the waist, the two ends of which, after it was tied, fell down in front; and lastly, there was a curious girdle to the ephod.

Besides what we have named, there was what is called the *Urim and Thummim*, which was put into the breastplate, and by which the priest inquired for direction from Jehovah in all times of difficulty. No one can now exactly tell what the meaning of Urim and Thummim is. There was also a plate of gold on the front of the mitre, on which was written, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD."



All these garments were designed to show the dignity of the high priest's office, and the purity which ought to belong to it.

The high priest enjoyed great honors, and was considered next to the chief Governor of the Jews. No other person could enter the Holy of Holies, and all sacred things were under his entire direction. people's sacrifices, blessed them, and interceded for them, and was a type or representation of Jesus Christ, who is called "the Great High Priest of our profession, and who ever lives to plead for sinners."

Besides the high priest, were many priests of less distinction, and they were all of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

Many of these prepared and offered the sacrifices, they kept a fire constantly burning on the altar for burnt-offerings, and they kept the lamps



alive in the golden candlestick. ined the people as to diseases and practices which made them impure; and, in time of war, they carried the holy ark with the people, and sounded the trumpets to encourage them in the battle. They also blessed the people, as did the high priest.

Others of the Levites waited on the priests, and assisted them in their duties; they cleansed the sacred vessels, took care of the sacred place, sung psalms, played musical instruments, and did other services. These all were appointed cities to live in; and the priests, besides what they got from the sacrifices in the temple, had tithes, or a tenth of

all the corn and fruit which grew every year, and of all the cattle that was added to the people's stock. Their duties were very laborious and important, and it was right that, while they performed them faithfully, the people should take care of them, and for this God provided.

A chief part of the priests' labors consisted in presenting the offerings of the people to God. He did not want what they offered, for the cattle on a thousand hills are his; but every beast and bird that was slain, taught them that they had sinned against God, and deserved to die as those creat ires did; and while they must be sure that God could not forgive their sins, because they killed a bullock, a calf, a goat, a kid, a sheep, or a bird; those among them that truly served God saw that all these things were signs, or "shadows of good things to come," and that they all pointed to the Messiah—that is, Jesus Christ—who was to be the great offering once for all, and then all these sacrifices were to be, as they now are, done away. So that, instead of going with sacrifices to an altar as the Jews did, we now so and pray to God to pardon our sins every day, for the sake of his dear Son Jesus Christ, who has loved us, and given himself for us, and whose precious blood "cleanseth from all sin."

The offerings had different names, as they were offered on different occasions.

There were burnt-offerings, which were all consumed by fire, to show us that nothing less could save us than the entire sacrifice of Christ for our sins. There were peace-offerings, part of which were offered, and the rest went to the priest; these were signs of peace between God and the offerer. There were sin-offerings, for sins done without knowing they were sins at the time; and these teach us that all sin is destructive, and must be pardoned through Christ. There were trespass-offerings, of which we particularly read in Leviticus; these were offered if the person even doubted and supposed that he might, perhaps, have offended God Almighty. There were also meat-offerings, drink-offerings, and wave-offerings, so called from the priest waving or moving them backwards and forwards—and a number of other offerings; all which were to remind the people of Israel that they were sinners, and to make them humble before God, and grateful for his mercies.

# The Golden Calf.

#### Exodus xxxII.

MOSES having been with God in the Mount to receive instructions for the good of Israel, during forty days and forty nights, at length descended, bringing with him two tables or pages of stone, "written with the finger of God," and having the ten commandments upon them.

We have before told you, that God has not bodily parts like us, for he is a Spirit; but as we write with our fingers, so, to make us understand that this writing was God's own doing, it is said to be written by his finger, as we should do it.

With what delight did Moses bear this honorable and precious treasure, such as no nation beside could boast! But how greatly was he disappointed on his return!

The people, tired with waiting for Moses, and perhaps supposing that he had died somewhere in the Mount, wanted another leader, and forced Aaron to do as they pleased. And what do you think they fixed upon to lead them through the wilderness? You can hardly fancy they could be so foolish, when we tell you. Why, a lump of gold, made into the shape of a calf!

With the same readiness with which they had given their gold and silver to make the materials for the Tabernacle, they now gave their ornaments to make their fancied god.

This inclination to idols they had got in Egypt, where the people made and worshipped such things.

And how low, too, is poor Aaron fallen! for after he had made the molten calf, cast in a mould, as children cast playthings of lead, "When Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord.

"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

This was the manner of the heathen; and it means that they are and drank more than they ought, and that they did both foolishly and wickedly afterwards, as drunken people do.

And now Moses descended from the Mount, and he heard the people rejoicing, and he saw the calf and the dancing; and in his anger he threw down the tables of stone, of which they were so undeserving, and the laws which they had so shamefully broken, after they had promised faithfully to attend to them; and so the tables were broken in pieces.

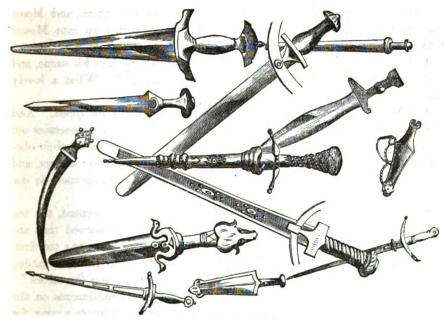
"And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it."

Gold powder will sink, but gold can be made into leaf, which is very light and very thin; and if it were so made, and then broken, it would easily swim. And so Moses made these foolish people swallow their god. Nothing could better teach them how foolish it was to worship idols.

Poor Aaron was quite ashamed, and he made a very weak excuse for the part he had taken in this affair. He said, that when he took their gold he cast it into the fire, and there came out the calf; as if the calf would have come out if he had not made the mould.

And now Moses saw that the people were naked before their enemies—an

expression which means wretched, as a person is that can get no clothes to wear; and that the anger of the Lord might be wholly turned away, he tried if there were any that disapproved of what had been done. And he stood in the gate of the camp, and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together



ANCIENT HEBREW SWORDS.

unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,"—for God commanded this,—"Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.

"And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." These were, probably, the chief transgressors, and so God spared the rest of the people and destroyed them. In this we are taught that when God gives us every proof of his power, his love and his care, and supplies all our real needs, he will be jealous of our trust and worship; and that those who, in disregard of his instruction, lead also others into disobedience and sin, are especially the subjects of his displeasure, and will accordingly be punished.

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### The Ten Commandments renewed.

### EXODUS XXXIV. 4.

WHEN Moses came down from the Mount, he threw down the tables of stone, and brake them to pieces. God, therefore, in token of his still keeping Israel as his people, renewed his laws with them, and Moses was ordered to prepare some new tables, and to go again up into Mount Sinai.

And there the Lord proclaimed or made known to him his name, and that he was "the Lord God, merciful and gracious." What a lovely name! Oh, let us love him who bears such a name!

And Moses "bowed his head forward to the earth and worshipped." And he pleaded again for Israel; and God promised to drive their enemies out of the promised land of Canaan; but he required as a proof of their obedience to him, that they should destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves, where they worshipped, as the Druids used to do, long after, in England.

And Moses wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. In the first verse, you have probably observed that the Lord said unto Moses, "Hew these two tables of stone like unto the first, and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest;" but here it is said, "Moses wrote upon the tables."

This is easily explained: God wrote the original commandments on the tables deposited or placed in the ark, and Moses probably wrote a copy for the use of the people.

And now Moses descended from the Mount, and having been favored so greatly by God, "the skin of his face shone before all the people, and they were afraid to come nigh him." "And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face:" and he "spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded."



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# LEVITICUS:

So called, because the book gives the laws relating to divine worship to be conducted by the Levites, who we's chosen to be the ministers of the Israelites. It relates principally to the priests, however, "the sons of Aaron." It was written by Moses and is divided into twenty-seven chapters. The matter of this book seems closely connected with Exodus at its commencement, and with Numbers at its conclusion.

# The Burnt-offering.

#### LEVITICUS I. 1-3.

HE Levites were all of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Israel; the priests were of the family of Aaron, who was a descendant of Levi. Both priests and Levites were employed in sacred services in the sanctuary, and their whole lives were devoted to these duties.

For a long time the patriarchs were priests in their own families, and offered up sacrifices; but by divine appointment the family of Aaron was now set apart to perform all sacred duties, as there was a large congregation, and a

Tabernacle in which they were to assemble.

This book treats of the duties which the priests and Levites were to perform.

In this chapter you may read the account of the burnt-offering.

You will see that it was to be "a male without blemish;" that is, the best of the herd, for we ought always to serve God with the best of everything. Then it is said, "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord;"—to teach us, that if we do not serve God with all our hearts, our service is not pleasing in his sight.

It is also said in the fourth verse, "And he," that is, the person who offers the sacrifice, "shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." Now in doing this, it was to signify that he deserved to die as the poor beast was to die; but that he begged of God to accept the life of the animal instead of

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his life. And God did so; having respect to the death of his dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, who is called "the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." There is no doubt that as we look back by faith to the merits of his death, so good men then looked forward, through these ceremonies, to him who in a future time should come to redeem Israel.

Now you may better understand the meaning of that verse of a hymn which is often sung in many congregations—

"My faith would lay her hand On that dear head of thine, While like a penitent I stand, And there confess my sin."

But some persons were too poor to bring a bullock to be sacrificed when they offered a burnt-offering, and then they were to bring a calf, a sheep, a



THE SIN-OFFERING.

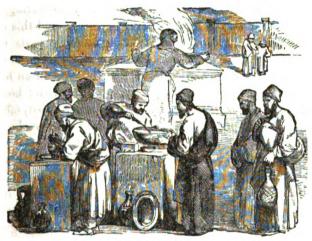
goat, a kid, or even a lamb—a "turtle-dove," or a "young pigeon." So that the poorest were not neglected by a merciful God, and were taught alike to look to the same way of salvation. The rich and the poor both alike need a Saviour, and Jesus Christ, who is "the Lamb of God," is "rich in mercy" to all them that call upon him; and those who have had much committed to their trust, either in possessions or talents, will find occasion for greater offerings to him,—whilst those who have had less will find as full reward if they bring to him what they can.

# The Meat-offering.

### LEVITICUS II. 1-3.

THE meat-offering was of five sorts:—1. Simple flour and meal. 2. Cakes and wafers; that is, very thin bread. 3. Cakes baked in a pan. 4. Cakes baked on the frying-pan, or probably a gridiron. 5. Green cars of corn parched.

In offering their meat-offerings, the Jews owned God as the Giver of all the fruits of the earth.



THE MEAT-OFFERING.

There was to be no leaven or yeast in this offering; for that ferments and produces corruption, and our offerings to God must be pure. There was to be salt with all the sacrifices; for it seasons things and makes them savory, teaching us again that our good things must be presented to God.

All these things are called typical—that is, they are meant to show to us other things of much more importance than they themselves; just as a picture shows us the likeness of a real person, but you know it is not the person. Thus the most important services of the Jews were intended to typify the most wonderful events which in God's goodness were to happen to the world; and we find in the leading events of the New Testament the first causes of nearly all the types in the Old.

# The Sacrifices.

### LEVITICUS III., IV., V., VI., VII.

AS the sacrifices very much resembled each other, all having respect to the great sacrifice of Christ, we need not explain them any more, separately. Only it will be well for you to remember, that when we read about the killing of the animals, and the sprinkling of blood upon the altars, and the offering of fruits, and the burning of different parts, and the giving of other parts to the priests, and a number of other particulars; though at first sight they may not seem to be very interesting, yet they are very much so, when we can find out their meaning; and this is not left to our fancies, but we may know it by looking at other parts of the Bible. For instance, we read in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"-in other words, if the blood of the animals offered by the priests under the law given by Moses, had so much virtue, that it removed uncleanness and guilt, or sin and guilt before God, he having promised it should do so because he had commanded it; then how much more shall the precious virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ, who died to save sinners, and through the power of his Spirit sustained all our load of guilt, which no mere human creature could have borne;—how much more shall the virtue of his sacrifice take away all guilt from the conscience arising from sinful deeds, so that you may with pleasure serve the living God!

Again, we read in the same chapter, that "CHRIST was once offered to bear the sins of many." For other sacrifices were offered from time to time, as offences occurred, and there were even daily sacrifices; but when Christ died on Calvary, he died once for all, and all sacrifices then ceased. For, it is worthy of your notice, that soon after Christ had died on Calvary, the Jewish nation was, for their hardness of heart against God, destroyed and scattered abroad in all countries, as they are to this day. The Romans, then a great power, were God's instruments to effect this; and then their temple was destroyed, in which their sacrifices were offered, and the tribes were mixed all in confusion; so that the tribe of Levi could soon no longer be known, to offer sacrifices. But Christ had made them needless: they

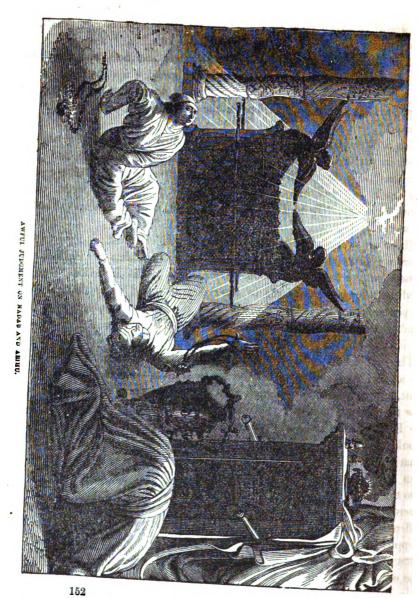
had all along been as guides to lead to him; and now he was slain, those who would be saved must by faith trust on the benefits of his death, "who himself bear our sine in his own body on the tree."

Think what a labor and expense all these sacrifices must have been; and what a burden of ceremonies was taken away, when the Saviour closed, as it were, the book of the Law, and opened to us that of the everlasting Gospel, which says only, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

You will find a number of seemingly trifling instructions given to the priests in performing their duties and offering the sacrifices, and perhaps some may be difficult to understand; but you must never forget that they teach us this one great truth,—they point, as it were, to Jesus Christ, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

There are some customs not yet noticed, which must also be explained before we proceed. In the fourth chapter we read that the bullock offered in sacrifice was to be burnt without the camp. The Israelites, you know, lived for a long time in tents in the wilderness, and when these tents were all pitched together, they formed what is called a camp—looking like a number of little cottages standing in rows. The carrying of the bullocks outside the camp to be burnt was to signify that sin is offensive.

The priest had committed a sin, he had laid his hand on the head of the animal and confessed it; the sin was thus considered as laid on the beast, and the bullock was made vile. It also expressed that this sin was now taken away and the camp was purified from it. Now, the writer to the Hebrews says, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." No; they only did this as a type or picture of what Christ afterwards did in reality. So in the Hebrews this custom is thus explained: "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, for sin, are burned without the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." When the Jews dwelt in houses, and worshipped in the Temple at Jerusalem, these bodies were carried outside the gates of the city; and when Christ, the great sacrifice, was offered up, it was on Mount Calvary, which was outside the gates of that city. This will help further to show you the meaning of these sacrifices, and how n orly the type, or thing representing, was like the antitype, or thing which had been represented.



## Consecration and Duties of the Priests.

LEVITICUS VIII., IX.

MOSES, in the way in which he was commanded, consecrated, or set apart, Aaron and his sons to be priests, and to offer up the sacrifices of the people of Israel.

There is one thing which ought to be noticed in this place, that you may understand its meaning, because it appears at first to be a very odd kind of ceremony. After the ram of consecration was slain, "Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot;" and then he did the same also to Aaron's sons. This is generally supposed to mean, that the priest's ears should be holy, and that his hands should be employed in holy work, and his feet should tread in holy ways; and as the blood was to touch each part, that the blood of the atonement, shed on Calvary, as it were, touching our hearts by believing in it, alone can render our services acceptable and pure in the sight of God. Every little thing here commanded had, without doubt, some interesting meaning.

### Awful Judgment on Nadab and Abihu.

LEVITICUS X. 1-8.

In this chapter we see what a fearful thing it is to disobey God. Nadab and Abihu had just been appointed priests, and it was a part of their duty to burn *incense*, as an emblem or sign of *prayer* (which, if offered aright, ascends to heaven), and especially of the merits of Jesus Christ, which always plead in heaven for them that pray for blessings on his account.

But Nadab and Abihu disobeyed the command of God; for they not only took the incense of their own accord, when he "commanded them not," but they presumptuously disregarded what God had said about burning incense on the altar of incense, as it is recorded in the ninth verse of the thirtieth chapter of Exodus—"Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon." Mosce had not given them any of the incense which he had ordered to be made according to the Divine direction, so that they must have used some common kind of incense; besides this, instead of taking sacred fire from the altar, which had been kindled with fire from heaven, they took strange fire,—

probably from that with which the flesh of the peace-offering was boiled, as Moses commanded Aaron and his sons, as mentioned in the eighth chapter and the thirty-first verse.

The priests were also commanded to burn incense, one at a time; but here both went together to do it. This seems a severe punishment for such



THE HIGH PRIEST OFFERING INCENSE.

an offence; but it was very wicked to disobey God; and, by taking common fire, they profaned God's sacred altar. It had also been threatened in the law, that those who disobeyed the commands of God should be cut off from the people. And now God shows that what he spoke was truth. In an instant Aaron's two sons fell dead: God struck them with a blast of lightning; for as neither their bodies nor coats were burnt, and yet they were suddenly dead, the manner of their death shows how it was done.

And now their lifeless bodies were carried out of the camp, looked upon, no doubt, with wonder by the affrighted people; and lest they should seem to favor their sin in any way, none of their kindred were allowed to mourn for them. Oh, "who is able to stand against this holy Lord God?"

### Laws respecting the Food of the Israelites.

#### LEVITICUS XI.

THE Israelites were God's peculiar people, and he would therefore distinguish them as much as possible from all others. Among other things he regulated their food, and told them what they were to eat, and what they were not to eat.

You ask, "What reason can be given for this law?" And the answer must be that which the good Matthew Henry gives, who wrote a work on the Bible. He says, "It is reason enough that God would have it so: his will, as it is law sufficient, so it is reason sufficient; for his will is his wisdom. He saw good thus to try and exercise the obedience of his people, not only in the solemnities of his altar, but in matters of daily occurrence at their own table, that there they might remember they were under authority. Thus God had tried the obedience of man in innocency, by forbidding him to eat of one particular tree." He, however, mentions some reasons which are also very good ones: "Most of the meats forbidden as unclean are such as were really unwholesome, and not fit to be eaten; and those of them that we think wholesome enough, and use accordingly, as the coney (a kind of rabbit), the hare, and the swine, perhaps in those countries, and to their bodies, might be hurtful: and then, God in this law did by them but as a wise and loving father does by his children, whom he restrains from eating that which he knows will make them sick. God would, also, thus teach his people to distinguish themselves from other people, not only in their religious worship, but in the common actions of life." In this way they were types, or pictures, to show what all good people should be in future ages—a people whose lives and customs should differ from those of the rest of the world. It is to be noticed that the fish, birds and beasts, which are spoken of as an abomination, which did not include all that were unclean, were those which were worshipped or used for divination among the heathen: the eagle, ibis, raven and owl; the lizard, ferret, cat, and the predatory fishes.

It is said, and with much probability, that the condition of slavery in which the Israelites had been living, had developed in them a tendency to scrofulous disease, which could only be eradicated by abstinence from indigestible meat, as swine's flesh, etc.

Many things forbidden to the Israelites, which are not hurtful, we now eat, as pigs, and hares, and rabbits; for we are not restricted as the Jews,

TNCLEAN ANIMALS.



PELICAN



WHITE STORK.



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OWL

### UNCLEAN ANIMALS.



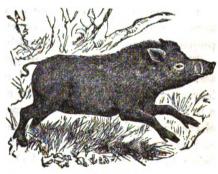
OSTRICH.



EGYPTIAN IBIS.



HER EAGLE



WILF BOAR.

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were; and the Gospel teaches us that "every creature of God is good," and we are "to call nothing common or unclean." Even the touch of any of these animals, after they were dead, defiled; so that the person that touched them was obliged to wash his clothes, and be for a while unclean, and keep company with no one. And the very things which they touched must be washed as unclean; and if they were made of earthenware, they were to be broken. By these things they were taught to avoid everything that could pollute them. And this shows us, as in a glass or picture, how much God hates sin, which is to the soul much more defiling than these things could be to the body, and highly offensive to his holy nature.

### The Laws on the Leprosy.

LEVITICUS XIII., XIV.

WE often read in Scripture about lepers. The leprosy is a very loathsome and destructive disease. These chapters describe the disease as it existed in men, in clothing, and in dwellings.

In men this disorder affects the skin, and produces white scurf and scabs, and corrupts the whole mass of blood. It is dangerous to touch a leper, for the disorder is very infectious. Travellers in the East have seen people afflicted with it; and they say that it defiles all the skin, and swells all the joints of the body, particularly the wrists and the ankles, so that the sufferer is a pitiable object. The poor who have this disorder beg with buckets to receive the alms; perhaps, because they will not touch the money, which people would then be afraid of taking.

The leper, under the law, was commanded to show himself to the priest; and Moses being divinely taught to point out the signs of a dangerous leprosy, gave proper directions for examining him. If the disorder was of a bad kind, the leper was to be separated from society; he was to tear his clothes, as the Jews did in extreme grief; he was to throw off his turban, and have his head bare; and to put a covering upon his upper lip, his jaws being tied up with a linen cloth, as the dead were bound up; and in addition to these marks, by which he might be known and avoided, he was to cry, "Unclean, unclean;" and he was to dwell alone, and at a distance from the camp.

When a leper was cured, there were several ceremonies to be gone through, which are mentioned in the fourteenth chapter.

The leprosy in clothes seemed to have been something like moths in garments; and it is supposed that it was caused by a kind of insect getting into them.

The leprosy in houses certainly resembled what builders call the *dry-rot*, which now gets into houses, beginning at the foundation, and causing all the timbers soon to rot, even to the top, if not speedily cured. It is thought that a sort of worms produced this evil. In some cases this leprosy was very obstinate, and the house was in consequence entirely pulled down.

Now, you may wonder why there is so much about this leprosy mentioned here; but we have told you, that all things under the law were shadows or representations of spiritual things, or things relating to the soul, and which still exist. Do you know that you have got this dangerous leprosy? We will tell you what it is—Sin: for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin defiles the soul before God, as the leprosy defiles the body. Sin is infectious, and one sinner destroys much good.

For this reason, perhaps, a bird was killed at the ceremony of the purification of the leper, to show that Christ died for our sins; and another bird was let loose, after being dipped in the blood of the slain bird, to show forth the resurrection of our Saviour, in consequence of having done away our guilt, by his death in our stead, who otherwise deserved death.

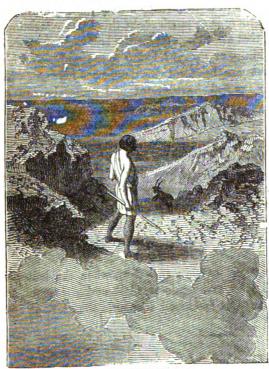
The leprous house may, in the same way, show us that, as there is sin in our mortal body, which is the house of the soul, and which sin exposes us to pain, decay, and death; so it is only by the pulling down of the body, or house, that we can entirely get rid of sin; and then, when the believer's body is turned to dust, God, who first made it, shall make it again, and change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Redeemer.

## The Scape-Goat.

### LEVITICUS XVI.

THE grand subject of the sixteenth chapter, to which your attention is called, is the great day of atonement, on which the SCAPE-GOAT was made to bear the sins of the people. The numerous other sacrifices were for particular persons, and on occasions which respected objects of a more limited nature, but on this occasion an atonement was made for the whole Israelitish nation: this happened once a year: the whole service of the day was performed by the high priest, who was to be dressed, not in his

splendid robes, but in an humble dress of linen: he was to bring, first, a sin-offering and a burnt-offering for himself; to offer first his sin-offering, and then to go within the veil with some of the blood of his sin-offering, burn incense, and sprinkle the blood before the mercy-seat. Two goats were to be provided for the people; lots were then to be cast, to know which goat to offer: this was done by putting two pieces of wood, stone, or metal, into a pot, on one of which was written, "for the scape-goat:" the



THE SCAPE-GOAT

goats then stood on the priest's right and left hand, and as he took out the papers with both hands, the one to whose lot that name fell was to be set free. The one goat was then slain as a sin-offering for the people; and the blood of it, and of the other sin-offering, was sprinkled upon the altar. The other was to be the SCAPE-GOAT, or the goat which was allowed to escape: the high priest laid his hands on his head, and then confessed the sins of Israel; and he was to bear away these sins into the wilderness, to which he was led and allowed to go free. Burnt-offerings and sinofferings were then added:

the fat of the sin-offering was burnt on the altar, and the flesh without the camp. The people rested from labor on that day, and they mourned their sins. This was the practice on the day of atonement.

You will wonder how the SCAPE-GOAT could bear away the sins of the people; but you must understand that this scape-goat was to typify or exhibit, as in a picture, the great Saviour of sinners, JESUS CHRIST, of whom the sacrifices were constant representations. We are pardoned through the death of Christ, who "died for our sins," if we believe on him; and we

shall be made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and enjoy immortal life—that is, a life of joy that can never end—through the resurrection of Christ. Now, both these truths were taught here as in a shadow. But one goat could not teach both; for the goat that died could not live again. Therefore there were two goats appointed to be used: one was slain, as we have told you, to set forth the death of Christ, the great atonement or reconciler between God and man; and the other was let free into the wilderness, bearing the people's sins, to show that all those were to be forgotten through him, and lost like the goat in the wilderness, and that through his life we should not die.

# The Year of Jubilee.

### LEVITICUS XXV. 10.

THE Jews, besides keeping every seventh day as a day of rest, were also commanded to keep every seventh year, called on that account the Sabbatical Year. This was an additional remembrancer of the Sabbath

In that year, therefore, they neither sowed nor reaped, but only gathered anything the ground produced of its own accord, just as they wanted it; leaving the rest for the poor, for servants, for strangers, and cattle. Thus they were taught compassion towards servants and cattle, and benevolence to the poor; thus they were instructed to depend upon God's providence for their support, who could, if they obeyed his commands, provide for them without labor, or bless their labor; and thus



PROCLAMATION OF JUBILER.

they were reminded of a better rest, which this was to signify—a neverending Sabbath in heaven.

There was another remarkable privilege enjoyed by the Jews, and that was the Year of Jubilee.

This was every fiftieth year. After spending "seven times seven years," which make forty-nine, the Jews were to keep the fiftieth year, or, some think, the last year of the forty-nine.

In this year there was neither sowing nor reaping; but the earth brought forth fruit of itself. All estates which had been bought were restored to their first owners, so that no family could be finally made poor by a father's selling the property forever. Hebrew slaves, with their wives and children, were set free; and even all foreign slaves enjoyed the right of the Jubilee. The first nine days were spent in joyful feasting; on the tenth, which happened always to be the great day of the annual atonement, the trumpets were sounded, and at that moment the slaves were declared free, and the lands returned to their ancient owners. Houses and other buildings in walled towns only, did not return to the old proprietor in the jubilee.

By this wise law, the rich could not oppress the poor, by getting possessed of all the property in the country; and debts could not last always, for the jubilee made them void; and the slave had a hope of a final release.

In making purchases, therefore, this law was always remembered, and a proportionable value was given as the year of jubilee drew nigh.

But this year had a spiritual signification. It was a type or representation of the redemption of sinners, by Christ, from the slavery of sin and Satan, and the restoring of man, who by transgression has lost his title to eternal blessedness, so that he becomes the heir of heaven—that "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

In many religious assemblies there is a hymn sung which refers to this Jewish institution, and which partly explains its meaning; it is too long to be inserted here, but a few verses may assist in explaining the subject, and impressing it on your memory. It begins with alluding to the preaching of the Gospel, which is often compared to the blowing of the jubilee trumpet, which proclaimed liberty to the captive; and so does the Gospel proclaim deliverance to all those who are the slaves of sin, and would desire deliverance through the great Saviour of sinners.

"Blow ye the trumpet, blow!
The gladly solemn sound,
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound.
The year of jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home

Ye, who have sold for naught
The heritage above,
Shall have it back unbought,
The gift of Jesus' love:
The year of jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.

"Ye slaves of sin and hell,
Your libesty receive;
And safe in Jesus dwell,
And blest in Jesus live.
The year of jubilee is come;
Beturn, ye ransomed sinners, home.

"Exalt the Lamb of God,
The sin-atoning Lamb;
Redemption by his blood
Through all the lands proclaim.
The year of jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

You will wonder to read about slaves among the people who were the particular people of God; this must therefore be explained to you before this book is closed, and perhaps this is the best time.

The Hebrews had a great number of slaves. These differ from servants, in this way: a servant may do the same work, but is not his master's property, and may leave him whenever he likes; but a slave is his master's property as much as his horse or his ox, and durst not run away; nor is another allowed to keep him, for he keeps stolen goods. We are sorry to write as if slaves still exist—for they do; and in the West Indies, belonging to England, till very lately there were slaves. There they have black people to manage the growing of sugar, because the country is too hot for whites to work, who are used to a colder climate; and these people were, not long since, stolen from their own country in Africa and sold as slaves, and cruelly treated by their masters-indeed, some of them are very rough to them still. But Jewish slaves were not liable to the same evils. Those taken in war were bought, sold, or exchanged, like goods; but this was a special punishment of the Almighty on idolaters, and none of these were stolen; for he that stole a man was to be put to death. The Hebrew slaves were poor persons, who sold themselves, just as a man now takes what is called a bounty, or a sum of money, to become a soldier for many years; or they had run in debt without thinking how they were to pay, and were

obliged to sell themselves for want of money; or they were delivered as slaves by their parents, who were not able to keep them, and so were a kind of apprentice for a number of years. So you see that, though the Jews were allowed to have slaves, they were under very strict regulations to treat them with kindness; and all, except the heathen slaves, were set at full liberty in the year of jubilee. Those who had kind masters often returned to live with them a second time; when they went to the judges, told them they wished to live with their good old masters all their days, and then, in token of it, had their ears bored with an awl against the doorposts of their master's house; when they became his property till another year of jubilee, which probably few ever lived to see. The account of this ceremony you will find in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus.

### Vows.

#### LEVITICUS XXVII.

A VOW was a promise made to God of doing some good thing hereafter. The meaning of the first verse of this chapter is this: if any one has vowed to give any person or thing to the Lord, if he wishes to ransom it, or to give its value instead, for the benefit of the house of God, the priest in that case may set a value upon it, and take that value in money instead of the person or thing vowed.

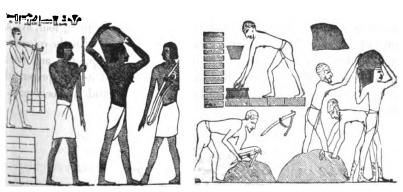
You will read here of the value of a male, and of a female, and of a beast, and of a house, and of a field; for all these a man might, perhaps, vow to give to God.

But why should he so vow or promise? and what need had God of them?

I will tell you. A man might have received some very great kindness from God beyond the bounty and goodness which we all receive every day. Under the fresh recollection of this, with a heart full of gratitude, he might say, "Oh, what shall I do in return, to show how much I thank God? I will give my servant for the service of his house forever: there he shall work and help the priests. Or, I will give a bullock as a proof of my gratitude, and it shall be offered on his altar." So, when Jacob went into Mesopotamia, he vowed to God a tenth part of his estates; that is, as if a man who has ten fields should vow one of them, which would be the tenth; or have a hundred cattle should vow ten of them, which







SLAVES VARIOUSLY EMPLOYED

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would also be the tenth, and he promised to offer it at Bethel to the honor of God.

Now a man, when he thought more about it, might have wished that he had not vowed what he had—perhaps even a daughter. In that case, a value was set upon the vow, and he paid that value.

There was, however, a more rigid vow, in which nothing could be redeemed; but the things vowed were to be devoted entirely and at once to the service of the Lord. So we read—"No devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possessions, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord."

We read in this chapter about tithes. These were a tenth part of what the earth brought forth, which God commanded to be given to the support of religion; and also a tenth part of the flocks and herds which fed upon the fruits of the earth. You will read, in the thirty-second verse, of a curious way of taking this tenth: "And concerning the tithe of the herd. or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Now, when a man was to give the tithe of his sheep or calves to God, he was to shut up his flock in one fold, in which there was one narrow door, capable of letting out one at a time. The owner, about to give the tenth to the Lord, stood by the door with a rod in his hand, the end of which was dipped in vermilion-a very red color, or red ochre. with which you sometimes see sheep now marked; the mothers of these lambs or calves stood without. The door being opened, the young ones ran out to join themselves to their dams; and as they passed out, the owner stood with his rod over them, and counted one, two, three, four, five, and so on to ten; and when the tenth came, he touched it with the colored rod, by which it was distinguished to be the tithe calf, sheep, etc.; and whether poor or lean, perfect or blemished, that was received as the proper tithe. This is the account the Jews give of taking the tithe, and it is believed to be correct.



# NUMBERS:

DERIVES its name from the numbering of the Israelites. The account of the march through the wilderness is given, together with the early incidents of the invasion of Palestine. The book was written by Moses, and is divided into thirty-six chapters.

### The Numbering of the Tribes of Israel.

NUMBERS I., II.

N the second year after Israel had come out of Egypt, Moses was ordered to number the people. They had greatly increased in numbers, and God would now prove to them how he had kept his word to Abraham, that he should be the father of a very numerous posterity. They were so unbelieving, as by this time you must well know, that they would hardly have thought it possible they were so numerous, had Moses only told them their

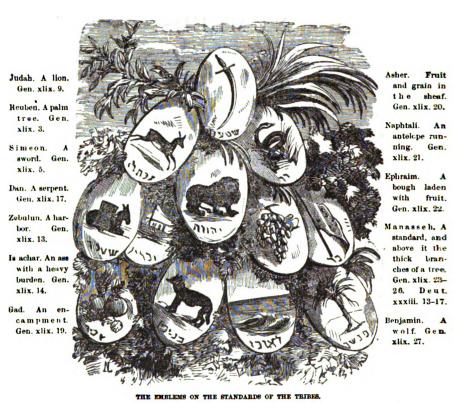
number; and so he was ordered to count them, that they might see for themselves.

What a wonderful increase was here! You must well remember that when Jacob's sons went down into Egypt there were only seventy souls; and now, about two hundred and eighteen years afterwards, the people are indeed "as the stars of heaven for multitude."

They had also murmured and sinned against God; so that he had resolved that they should never be put in possession of the promised land of Canaan, but that their children only should have it. These would then know how true was the word of God, when, at the end of thirty-eight years, they should find there were but three left out of this large number, now amounting to six hundred and twenty-five thousand eight hundred and fifty men, reckoning those above twenty years of age; for at that period they were ordered to be counted again.

Another reason for this numbering of the people was to set them in proper order, so that, as they were now so very numerous, they might know how to march through the wilderness, which they were otherwise likely to do in great confusion, more like a mob than a regular army.

Yet a further reason is clearly understood, in the command to count all those only that were "able to go forth to war in Israel." For the children of Israel were very timid, and they would feel more courage when they knew how strong they were; though all their numbers would have been



nothing, if God had not protected them; for the Canaanites were much more numerous than they, when they entered into the land to drive them out: yet, as God was not with that idolatrous people, to protect them, they

often fled before a few handfuls of Israelites.

"Every man by their polls" means by the number of their heads, the word used being usually defined by such expressions as, "to take a list or register of persons;" "to enter one's name in a list;" "to insert into a number, as a voter," etc.; the original referring to the head, and being used pretty much as we use the words "heads" and "noses."

### The Law concerning Nazarites.

#### NUMBERS VI.

A NAZARITE means a separated person—that is, one who separates himself from the affairs of the world, to be entirely employed in the service of God.

Under the ancient law of Moses, there were persons who made peculiar vows to become Nazarites. When this was the case, the Nazarite would not allow himself to drink wine prepared in any way; for the sacred command respecting the Nazarite was, "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk." The reason of this was, that his understanding might be quite clear to meditate on God Almighty's goodness, and that he might be the fitter for praise and prayer to God.

The Nazarite never shaved his head, but let his hair grow. So God commanded: "All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head." He was not to cut off his hair in any way; for, at the end of the time fixed by his vow, he was to cut off the hair; and, as he could not offer his own body—for God did not require that—he offered his hair that he cut off, and put it in the fire on the altar of the Lord: this was a sign by which he would show that he belonged to the Lord.

The Nazarite was also not to enter any house in which there was a dead corpse, for that was defiling; nor was he to be present AT ANY FUNERAL. This is what is meant in those words, "All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no DEAD BODY. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die," which he would have done had he touched their dead bodies.

The vows of the Nazarites sometimes lasted for all their lives, but some only for as short a time as eight days.

When the time was over, the priest brought the person to the door of the Temple, who there offered to the Lord a he-lamb for a burnt-offering, a shelamb for a sacrifice of expiation or removing guilt, and a ram for a peace-offering. He also offered loaves and cakes, with wine. When all was done, the priest, or some one beside, shaved the head of the Nazarite at the door of the Tabernacle, and burnt his hair, for the reasons before men-

tioned, on the fire of the altar. Then the priest put into the hands of the Nazarite the shoulder of the ram which had been roasted, with a loaf and a cake, which the Nazarite put back into the priest's hands, who offered them to the Lord. From this time the Nazarite might again drink wine, and his yow was finished.

All this form about the Nazarite is meant to show us, that if we would separate ourselves for the service of God, as every Christian ought to do, we should "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

## The Offerings of the Tribes to the Tabernacle.

NUMBERS VII.

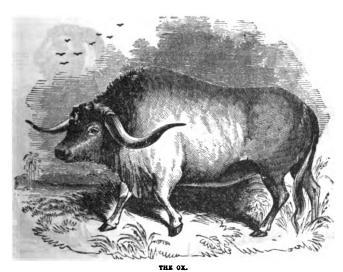
WE have read before about the building of the Tabernacle, and the duties of the various officers belonging to it. Here we have something more about it; and this chapter gives us an account of the liberal offering which God put it into the hearts of all the princes, or chief men of the tribes, to present for the use of the Tabernacle, after having probably collected some of what they gave from amongst the people.

They first presented "six covered wagons and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before As their other presents were very handsome, these the Tabernacle." wagons were no doubt the best of their kind, that they might be fit for the service of the Tabernacle. But what did they want with wagons? Why, you know that the children of Israel moved about from place to place in the wilderness, and that then they had to take down the Tabernacle, and move all its materials with them. You must recollect that there were persons called Levites, who were appointed to carry the materials: so Moses divided the wagons among them accordingly. To the Gershonites, or sons of Gershon, who had to carry the lighter things, such as the curtains and hangings, he gave two wagons, and two yoke of oxen; when they had loaded these, they must carry the rest, if any remained, upon their shoulders. The Merarites, that had the heavy carriage, or such things as were more solid and weighty-such as the boards, and pillars, and sockets-had four wagons, and four yoke of oxen; yet much must have remained for them to earry upon their backs, so that they were not to be idle; but they were not at the same time to be overburdened. The weight of which they had to take care was very great, for the silver sockets only weighed a hundred

#### CLEAN ANIMALS.



RED GOAT.



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#### CLEAN ANIMALS.



THE HART.





MOUNTAIN GOAT OF PALESTINE.

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LONG-EARED GOAT.

talents, which was about four tons, and one ton only is twenty hundred weight—every hundred weight, so called, being one hundred and twelve pounds. These four tons were enough to load four wagons that were drawn by but one yoke of oxen apiece; two oxen having quite as much as they could draw with one ton. Each socket being a talent weight, which is about a man's burthen, probably they carried those on their backs, and put the boards and pillars into the wagons.

Thus, you see, the wagons served to ease the Levites of their burthens; and being covered wagons, they would better protect some of the materials of the Tabernacle, that needed to be kept from the sun and weather.

"But unto the sons of Kohath he" (Moses) "gave none" (no wagons), "because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders." For in the fourth chapter we have read, that they had the charge of the ark, table, candlestick, altars, and the like, which were to be carried upon their shoulders; for those sacred things were not to be drawn by beasts.

The princes offered, besides, other things, during twelve days, one prince after the other,—that is, one every day for each tribe, according to the marching order of their standards; and their offerings were the same each day. This was as God commanded, that each tribe might have equal honor in contributing.

The offering of each prince was as follows: "One silver charger," or dish, perhaps to hold the meat-offering, the weight whereof was one hundred and thirty shekels; "which was above sixty-one ounces," and in value more than eighty dollars. "One silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary," or after the standard weight of the sanctuary; a standard being kept there to weigh the shekel exactly. This bowl was either to hold the drink-offering, or receive the blood of the sacrifices, weighed above thirty-three ounces, and was worth about forty-five dollars. "Both of them were full of fine flour, mingled with oil for a meat-offering." There was also "one spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense," intended for the service of the golden altar, and worth about ninety dollars.

Besides the before named, there were added "one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year." Part of these offerings were to be eaten with their friends,—expressing that the service of God may be connected with the moderate enjoyment of providential comforts; and part of them were to point to

Christ, the great sacrifice for sin, through whom, whatever we offer to God acceptably, must be received.

In all, then, there were twelve large silver dishes, as many silver cups, and as many golden spoons, for the service of the altar; besides the animals.

"This was the dedication of the altar after that it was anointed."

All this shows us that we ought to support the worship of God, and to do all that we can to keep it up in the world,—and that cheerfully and willingly, and as far as we can liberally.

### Directions about the Levites.

NUMBERS VIII. 1-14.

ARON is now told to light the seven lamps of the golden candlestick, and then to proceed to prepare the Levites for their work.

This he was to do in this way:—He was to sprinkle water upon them, and they were to shave themselves, and wash their clothes. All this meant that the ministers of religion must be good men, and not wicked men: good men being represented as purifying themselves, by God's help, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; or, of the disposition as well as of the practice; and evil men as being defiled, because they love sin and live in sin.

Now, God having spared all the first-born children of the Israelites, when he destroyed those of the Egyptians, just before the Israelites came out of Egypt, he desired that the first-born of "man and beast" should always afterwards be given to him; but instead of the first-born children, he accepted of the Levites.

"Thus," said the Lord to Moses, "shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine."

# The Pillar of Cloud and Fire.

NUMBERS IX. 15-23.

WE have a further account of the pillar of cloud and fire; and we are told that as soon as the Tabernacle was put up, this cloud rested over it, something like the clouds which you may have seen resting in the air on a fine day over the top of some high hill, and perhaps shining

with bright colors on the side next the sun, and looking dark on the other. "So it was alway: the cloud covered the Tabernacle by day, and the appearance of fire by night."

This cloud was meant to show the Israelites that God was present in a particular manner in his Tabernacle. You know that he is present everywhere, so that we can never get out of God's sight; but this was a token given to Israel only, to show that he was present with them, not only to see them and to hear them, but to protect them.

This cloud was also a sign for the people to follow, as armies follow a flag which guides them; for, "when the cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle, then, after that, the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched," or put down their tents to dwell in: "as long as the cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in the tents."

So, if the cloud moved, they marched; and if it rested, they rested; whether by night or by day: for by day it was dark, and they could see it; and it, perhaps, even cast a shadow over all the army, to keep it from the burning sun; and by night it was bright, and served as a bright moon to guide all their steps, and keep them from the confusion which such an army must have fallen into without such an aid. So, "whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried," or rested, "upon the Tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses." Probably, some one was also on the watch, to see the motions of the cloud night and day, as soldiers are kept as sentinels, and take turns with each other; and the children of Israel were also always ready to march at a moment's notice, as we ought always to be ready to obey the will of God, which we also often learn from his holy word; for this world is to us what the wilderness was to the Israelites.

## The Silver Trumpets, and March from Sinai.

NUMBERS X.

THE children of Israel had pitched their tents before Mount Sinai for about a year, and they were now expected to remove; but, before they marched, they were commanded to make two silver trumpets; these,

when both were blown, were to call the whole congregation together; and when one only was blown, it was to call the chiefs together. any alarm was blown, or, instead of one long and continued sound, the notes of one trumpet were made to rattle, the people were to march; and each time the rattling alarm sounded, making a noise like tara-tan-tara, different bodies were to march one after another, so as to prevent jostling and confusion. If the alarm was to prepare for war, then a tara-tan-tara was blown on two trumpets.

These trumpets were also to be blown in the day of "gladness," or whenever Israel might triumph over their enemies; on "solemn days," or festivals, as the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle; in the beginnings of their months, especially on the first day of the seventh month, which was a feast of blowing of trumpets: but you have been already told that nobody now knows exactly why this feast was kept; and lastly, these trumpets were to be blown over the "burnt-offerings," and over the "sacrifices" of their "peace-offerings," as expressing joy for the acceptance of them; and



especially when they had, by faith, a view of the great sacrifice of Christ, which these offerings were intended to represent.

There were only two trumpets, for that was the number of the priests. who were Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron; and the priests only were to blow these trumpets. In Solomon's time there were a hundred and twenty priests, and then there were as many trumpets.

And now the cloud moved, and all Israel moved. "And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses;" or, as we read in the ninth chapter—"At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched;" that is, set up their tents:—"as long as the cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in their tents:" Moses having given them God's command; and as we give things with the hand, it is here said to be given by the hand of Moses.

We may suppose that the cloud had stood for some time after it "was taken up from off the Tabernacle of the testimony," which was that part of the Tabernacle where the ark of the testimony stood, even the most holy place. There must have been a great deal of work, to take down all the tents, and pack up all the goods; but as every family managed their own, the work was not so long in doing as we might at first suppose.

Here we have their order of march. "In the first place went the standard," or colors, "of the camp of the children of Judah;" just as our soldiers often march with flags flying to distinguish the different regiments; and they had for their captain "Nahshon, the son of Amminadab." Then there was the Tabernacle, borne by the two families of the Levites, the sors of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who were appointed to carry it. For this there were six wagons.

The second squadron was Reuben's, with its flag flying and its captain; and this was followed by the Kohathites, bearing the sacred furniture of the Tabernacle; and those who had gone before with the Tabernacle set it up against these came with the furniture.

Then, third in order after the ark, followed Ephraim's squadron; and

Last, "the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rere-ward," or gathering body, "of all the camps throughout their hosts." These took with them what were left of the rest—some being unfit to mix with the body, as were the unclean, and some were too feeble to go first, so they were allowed to march behind, and get forward at a slower rate.

What a noble army was here! How grand a sight it must have been to have seen it marching! For Judah's camp had a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred men fit for war; and Reuben's a hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty warlike men; and Ephraim's one hundred and eight thousand one hundred men fit for soldiers; and Dan's one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred strong men; besides the

Levites and others that were behind. Would not you have liked to have seen the flags flying over this great multitude, which made in all *more than half a million* of men, besides women and children, and priests?

### The Murmuring Israelites fed with Quails.

#### NUMBERS XI.

THE Israelites had for some time conducted themselves very well, and nothing very wrong is related about them since they committed the sin of worshipping a golden calf, but here we find them complaining.

What were their complaints about? When we consider how kindly God guided their camp, what good victuals they had, and what good company, and what care was taken of them in their marches, that their feet should not swell nor their clothes wear, of which you will read in Deuteronomy—what cause could they have to complain?

Good Mr. Henry says, "Those that are of a fretful, discontented spirit will always find something or other to quarrel with, though the circumstances of their outward condition be ever so favorable."

Such conduct is very ungrateful to God, and very displeasing to him; and so he consumed the ringleaders of these murmurers as he did Nadab and Abihu: "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah, which means a burning; because the fire of the Lord burnt among them." And, by giving the spot this name, they would remember what they brought upon themselves by murmuring; and others would hear and fear, and take warning, not to sin as they did, lest they should smart as they did.

But what a provoking people were Israel! How fast one offence followed another! They soon murmured again. When they left Egypt "a mixed multitude went up also with them;" some perhaps being disposed to leave their country because it was wasted by plagues, and some hoping to benefit by sharing in the prosperity of Israel. These people, however, did not fear God, and they "fell a-lusting," or earnestly wishing for what they thought better food and for their own country. And the children of Israel followed

their bad example; and forgetting how cruel was their bondage in Egypt, and how great had been their deliverance, began to talk of the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlies, which formed their food when they were slaves there. They also spoke contemptuously of the manna which had proved such nutritious and agreeable food to them.

It is always an indication of very low and grovelling tastes in any people when they prefer a life of the most abject slavery, with the gratification of their appetites, to freedom with a more scanty fare. But in this case, the people had been bountifully fed, and yet they preferred slavery to freedom, and the onions, leeks and garlies of Egypt to the delicious manna. haps this is as good a place as any to describe what the manna was, and what it was not. There are a great many persons, and some very good people among them, who can never rest contented when they speak of any miracle of the Bible, unless they can make out that it was only the operation of natural causes, perhaps somewhat intensified by God's power, but not in any way a departure from natural laws. Now this is really very foolish. Did not God make all things at first? and does he not, by the word of his power, keep them in existence, or create them anew, if he pleases? Why then should we suppose that it required any greater exercise of power on the part of God to cause this peculiar substance, manna, to be deposited in such quantities around their camps wherever they were, six days of every week for forty years, and then stop it at once, than it would have required to cause the few shrubs in the peninsula of Sinai to have yielded daily throughout the whole year a quantity of gum much larger than their entire bulk? There is a tree of the Tamarisk family in the peninsula of Sinai, which yields in May, June and July only, a white gum which drops off in tears from its thorns, and hardens on the leaves, or on the ground. It is whitish, somewhat sweet, and is used as a laxative medicine. It is found only on the leaves of this shrub or under it, is not used for food, and the whole peninsula does not yield over about six hundred pounds of it, even in moist years. It does not spoil by keeping. Now, the manna of the Bible was not found on shrubs, but on the sand; it came every morning, except the Sabbath mornings, through the year for forty years, and then stopped at once and forever. It came in such quantities that the Israelites used fifteen million bushels of it a week; if exposed to the sun, it melted and evaporated; if preserved in the shade, it became spoiled except on Friday; it was not medicinal, and probably only very slightly, if at all, sweet, except when cooked. It possessed wonderfully nutritious qualities, which the gum

of the Tamarisk does not, and its name was derived from two Hebrew words, man hu, which mean, "What is this?" No, the manna was God's miraculous provision for feeding the Israelites, and there has never been anything like it before or since.

God also promised to let the Israelites have as much meat as they desired. Moses wondered how they could get so much meat, and he said, "The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?"—meaning, that if all the sheep, and goats, and bullocks were slain, which



THE QUAIL

they had for sacrifice, they would not last for a month; and expressing surprise how so many fish, as seemed to him necessary, could be caught.

But God fulfilled his word about the meat. "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the carth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague."

These are believed by naturalists to have been really quails like those we have, and not grouse or partridges. These quails return from their migrations to Africa at certain seasons, and are found in immense numbers in Arabia-Petræa even at this day. This wonderful profusion was none the less a miracle.

A day's journey in those hot and sandy countries is not far, for people cannot travel as they do here; but it is supposed that the quails might cover twenty miles of ground.

Two cubits high was about a yard deep, or half the height of a tall man; but the meaning probably is that the birds were so weary that they flew only about this height above the ground, and so were easily caught.

It is very doubtful what quantity a homer really contained. The word means "a heap." The rabbins make it about five and a half bushels, and so ten homers would be fifty-five bushels. This seems an immense quantity, but it would require as many as that to feed each family for a month, as God had promised.

So Moses called the place where this happened by a name that would ever afterwards make the Israelites remember their conduct to their shame: and he called the name of that place Kibroth-hat-taavah—that is, "the graves of lust," because there they buried the people that lusted.

# Miriam's Leprosy.

NUMBERS XII.

MOSES was a very meek man, and he had need to be, for not only was his patience tried by the murmurings of the Israelites, but even his kinsfolk, Miriam and Aaron, to whom he had been so kind, made him trouble.

Miriam had sung the song of triumph at the Red Sea, and Aaron was the high priest. The two had a quarrel with Moses about his wife. Some have supposed that this wife was Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel, the priestruler of Midian; but Zipporah was a Midianite and not an Ethiopian, and this chapter says, "for he had married an Ethiopian woman." Josephus says that after Zipporah's death, Moses married an Ethiopian princess. Whether this is true or not, it seems that she belonged to the Hamite branch of the family of Noah, and not to a Midianite, for these were the descendants of Abraham and of Shem.

It is probable that this displeased Miriam and Aaron; and as they had

made no alliances with the descendants of Ham, they assumed that they were equally entitled with Moses to be the leaders of Israel.

And God spoke from the pillar of the cloud, and desired Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam, to come out of their tents: and he spoke to them before the door of the Tabernacle, and told them that he was used to speak to prophets by visions and dreams, but Moses was not so, for with him be spoke mouth to mouth—that is, he spoke to him with perfect freedom.

And now the cloud withdrew, and Miriam was smitten with the leprosy. Aaron had been as guilty as Miriam, but he now begged Moses to ask God to heal her; and Moses prayed for her earnestly. God answered, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?" and not dare to go into her father's presence. "Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again." "And Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

"And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran."

### The Twelve Spies sent to Canaan.

### Numbers XIII., XIV.

THE people of Israel, though God had been so kind to them, did not seem yet wholly inclined to believe all that he promised. So they wished to send somebody into Canaan to know if it was a country really worth having.

Accordingly Moses chose a man out of every tribe; and, as there were twelve tribes, so of course there were twelve men sent as spies to see the land. I must tell you that a spy means a person who goes slyly to look at an enemy's army or country; for had it been known that these men were in Canaan to see if it was worth taking, and likely to be conquered, the Canaanites would soon have killed them, and the Israelites would have been no wiser for their journey.

"And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not: and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."

So the spies went all through the land from the south to the north. It is thought that they did not all go together; for then the Canaanites would have suspected them: but they went in several companies of two or three each, and so they passed very well for travellers.

"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a

branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and the figs." A traveller, who lived not many years ago, tells us that he saw grapes in the valley of Eshcol, the clusters of which weighed ten or twelve pounds, and another saw bunches at Damascus that weighed forty-five pounds. These grapes might be too large for one man to carry a great way in a warm country, or they might have been so ripe that they were liable to be bruised



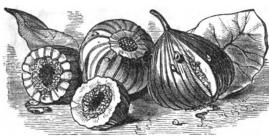
GRAPES OF ESHCOL

to pieces if squeezed in the hands, and so they were carried hanging upon a staff, one end of which was on the shoulders of one man, and the other end on the shoulders of another man, just as we sometimes see burdens carried between two men.

The spies also brought pomegranates. This is a fine fruit, which grows in the country which the spies visited, then called Canaan, and now more commonly known by the name of Palestine. The pomegranate bears a red blossom like a rose, is about the size of a large apple, and, being full of juice, is very pleasant, and valuable in a hot country for quenching the thirst. This fruit being considered handsome in shape, part of the ornaments of the high priest's robes were made like it. (Exodus xxviii. 34.)

"The spies returned from searching of the land, after forty days," and then they said to Moses, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it," showing him the fine grapes, and the pomegranates, and the figs. Well, then, so far they found that what God had told them by the rips of Moses

was quite true. Surely then they were ready to go and take the land No; these cowardly spies went on to say, "Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great: and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there." "And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." This was a very alarming story, and frightened the Israelites. They began to think how can we ever take such a country, where the people are so strong,—so well protected, in towns with thick and high walls all around their cities,—so tall that we are only little things by their side,—and where the land is the grave of the inhabitants,



POWEGRAWATES

and eats them up, as the grave seems to swallow up the dead body that is shut up in it, the people dying in great numbers by war and pestilence?

Caleb, the spy of the tribe of Judah, gave, however, a very different account of the country; he "stilled the

people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

And Joshua the son of Nun, who had been the spy of the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb, rent their clothes, which the Jews always did in great trouble; "And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, the land which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us: a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are breadfor us," as easily to be consumed as bread is by eating; "their defence is departed from them," for God would not protect them as they were so very wicked a people, "and the Lord is with us: fear them not."

Now this was very kind and encouraging language; but, instead of taking it as they ought, what do you think the people were about to do?

Why they prepared to stone Caleb and Joshua, and would have killed them; but just at that moment "the glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle" before them all, and so they were afraid of being dreadfully punished for their wickedness.

And, indeed, God resolved that he would punish them, and he said to Moses, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, so that they shall never possess the promised land, and I will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they."

But Moses pleaded with God. And he said that the Egyptians would delight to learn that the people were all destroyed; and the other wicked nations would say that God had brought them so far, but could not take them into the land he promised to give them; and therefore he prayed that, as God was very long-suffering and merciful, he would pardon the people, as he had done before when they offended him.

So God heard the prayer of Moses, for he is a God that hears prayer, and he did not cut the people off directly, but he told him that none of them should ever enjoy the promised land, since they were so mistrustful of him, and only Caleb and Joshua, of the whole of them, should have possessions in it; but having given a true report of the land, and trusted him to help them to take it, they should have the honor and happiness which the rest deserved never to enjoy.

And Moses and Aaron were commanded of the Lord to tell the people, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you"—that is, when the people were numbered—"according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me." And they were also to tell them, that Caleb and Joshua were not to die in the wilderness, and that the young Israelites should remain wandering about in the wilderness for forty years, till all their fathers were dead; that is, as many years as the spies were days searching out the land; so that they would always remember why it was that God kept them so long in the wilderness, because their fathers would not trust his word, and were afraid, on the report of the spies, of going into the land of Canaan.

And that the people might see that God would keep his word, he instantly punished the ten spies, who gave so ill a report of the promised land; for "they died by the plague before the Lord."

The next morning, after the people had heard the news, they resolved to go and take the land. But God had told them that they should not. Moses tried to reason with them, and to stop them, and he told them that now

they could not prosper: "Go not up," said Moses, "for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies."

But away the obstinate people marched up the mountain, by the way which the spies had before gone, and "the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites, which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them."

### Korah, Dathan, and Abiram swallowed up.

#### NUMBERS XVI.

MOSES, you know, was appointed to be the leader of Israel, and Aaron, his brother, to be the high priest. The tribe of Levi were to perform different services about the Tabernacle, such as preparing the sacrifices, cleansing the vessels, and many other things, mentioned when we noticed the Tabernacle, its furniture, and priests. It seems, however, that some of these did not like that they should do such things, while Moses and Aaron were placed above them.

So one Korah said all the ill-natured things that he could against Moses, and he got Dathan and Abiram, who were some chiefs of the tribe of Reuben, to join him, and to rebel against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Then they got two hundred and fifty princes of the tribes to join them, who, probably, being princes or chiefs, were the *first-born*, and, before Aaron was raised to be high priest, might probably have been priests themselves, as the first-born then were, but after that they were so no longer. And these told Moses and Aaron that they took too much upon them; for all the congregation were as holy as they, and had an equal right to their honors.

So Moses fell on his face, no doubt to pray to God, and Moses then told them to wait till the next day, and then, if Korah and the other rebels would take censers, or pans in which incense is burned, and offer incense before the Lord, they would see whom the Lord approved.

"And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou and they, and Aaron to-morrow: and take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer." To Korah and his party presumed to do so, and boldly stood in the door of the Tabernacle with Moses and Aaron.

And God's glory appeared. And God ordered Moses and Aaron to get out of the way, and he would destroy all the congregation in a moment.

And Moses and Aaron, instead of feeling glad that God would so punish them, did not wish to be revenged, but fell on their faces and prayed to God for them, and asked that, as they had been misled by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were therefore chiefly in fault, that God would spare them So God heard their prayer. And he desired them to tell the congregation to come away from about the tents of the rebels, and have nothing to do, with them, lest they should be destroyed with those wicked men.

So the congregation "got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side, and Dathan and Abiram came out," as if to dare Moses and Aaron, and God, by impudently standing alone, and waiting to see what could be done against them; "and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children."

Then Moses told the people that, if the chief rebels died a common death, God had not sent him; but, if the earth should suddenly swallow them up, then they would see that they had provoked God, or caused God to act as men do when provoked, and to punish his enemies; for God cannot be provoked as men are.

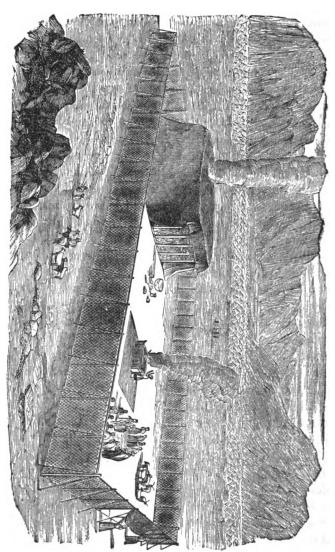
No sooner had Moses done speaking than they were all swallowed up, and all that they had. "And all Israel, that were round about them, fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also."

Not only did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram perish, but also "there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

Then "the Lord ordered Moses to tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron, to pick up the brass censers of the dead men, to throw away the incense, as a token that he rejected their prayers,—incense having been used to represent the sweet breath of prayer rising to heaven,—and to make of the censers a covering for the altar, by having them beaten out flat and thin. There was, indeed, then a covering of brass on the altar, which, as it was made of wood, needed that to protect it from the heat of the fire that was continually burning on it; but these censers, beaten out and put again upon the brass, would make the altar still more secure from injury, and this covering would ever serve to remind the Levites how wicked it was for those to dare to become priests whom God had not appointed to be so, and what a dreadful end would be likely to befall them who would dare to burn incense when he had not ordered them.

And now you will be astonished to learn, that after these things—and how long after, do you think? why only on the next day—"All the congre-





gation of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." They charged Moses and Aaron with killing the rebels, when God had done it before their eyes; and they called them the people of the Lord, when they had, by their wickedness, cut themselves off from him.

So the glory of the Lord immediately appeared in the cloud over the Tabernacle; for God heard all that this sinful people said,—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation that I may consume them as in a moment: and they fell upon their faces," to humble themselves, and to pray for the people.

It was very kind in Moses and Aaron to pray for people that behaved so badly to them, and so Christ teaches us to pray for our enemies, for all those who treat us with spite.

But the punishment had begun. The plague had seized them; and Moses, perhaps, having heard the people crying out in great distress, looked up, and saw them dying in all parts. So he hurried Aaron away for his censer with holy fire, which he was to take from the altar, and desired him to run in among the people, and burn incense, and make an atonement for their sins; "and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed." But so shocking an offence against God had caused the death of no fewer than fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those that died the day before.

### The Wonderful Budding of Aaron's Rod.

#### NUMBERS XVII. 8.

YOU may, perhaps, have seen some persons of different sorts of authority, walking with long staves, peeled white, or painted, or gilt; something of the kind was in use among the princes or chiefs of the tribes of Israel; you know there were twelve tribes, and so among them there were twelve rods belonging to their twelve princes.

Well, God told Moses that he would now work a miracle; that is to say, he would do something so out of the usual order of things, that he would so strongly convince Israel that he had chosen Aaron for his priest, that they should rebel no more on that account.

So he ordered Moses to get the twelve rods of the tribes, which were merely twelve dry sticks, and "to lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony," meaning the ark, in which the testimony or tables of the law were kept, and that man whose rod should blossom should be his priest.

Now the rod of the tribe of Levi was marked with Aaron's name; and, after the rods had been laid up for a night, on the morrow Moses went into the Tabernacle, and "behold the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." This was wonderful—wonderful that a dry stick should bud, and still more wonderful that the same rod should bear buds, and blossoms, and fruit at the same time!

Then Moses brought out all the rods which all the princes took, as they could easily know their own by having their names on them, and Aaron's wonderful rod was shown to the people. When they saw this rod, they were sadly frightened, and feared that they were all going to be punished with death, for having rebelled so against God, who now more plainly than ever gave honor to Aaron. God, however, did not punish them any further; but the rod was preserved in the ark for ages, still with its buds and blossoms and fruit, and there it remained in remembrance of the rebellion of Israel, and of God's choosing Aaron.

## Provisions for the Priests and Levites.

NUMBERS XVIII.

OD having fixed Aaron in his office, and now showed to all the people that he would have him for his high priest to atone for the people, he gave him very solemn orders to do his work, and for the Levites to do theirs. And he told Aaron that he and his sons should "bear the iniquity of the sanctuary," that is, the blame of neglect should fall upon them if anything was done to defile it and offend God there; so that they were obliged to look carefully after everything that was done by the Levites, as well as what they did themselves.

And then he provided comfortably for the priests from the different sacrifices; the parts not burnt with fire, and offered to the Lord, were to be theirs; and the best of the wine, and the oil, and the wheat; and the first ripe fruits of the land, such as figs, and apples, and plums, and pears, and pomegranates, and olives, and grapes. So were also the first-born of every animal, and even the first-born child was redeemed, or a sum of money given to the priest for him. Besides which they had thirteen cities to live

in, with houses and lands, and gardens and fields. (See the twenty-first chapter of Joshua.) The priests had also many other like means of support.

But Aaron had no inheritance in the land of Canaan when it was afterwards divided among the tribes; he was to have only the portion just described.

The Levites also were provided for. They were to have one part out of ten of all that the ground brought forth—that is, if there were ten bushels on a man's ground, he was to give one bushel to the Levites, whether barley, wheat, or any other grain. While employed in the Temple, they had provisions from its stores, and they were further allowed thirty-five cities to live in.

Thus God showed that he would have his ministers to keep to their work and be faithful to their duty, and that he would have them comfortably taken care of while they served him.

# The Red Heifer.

#### Numbers xix.

THERE were a great many customs, under the law, to explain which would take up too much room in this work. But not a few of them were meant to show us, as in a glass, that we are sinners in the sight of



THE RED ERLIPER.

God, and that, as sin is a defiling thing, we must not only be pardoned, but also purified. The law of the red heifer was of this kind. You may read the whole of it from the second to the tenth verse.

The heifer, you know, is a young cow. This animal was to be red, which, being a scarce color, was the most precious. It was to have no spot, a sign of purity. It was to be slain without the camp, as though it

were impure; for impure things were carried without the camp. The blood was to be sprinkled before the door of the Tabernacle, to have the virtue of a sacrifice, and, by being sprinkled seven times, it meant a perfect sacrifice;

for seven times was the number of the days in which God made all things, and was always considered, on that account, as a sign of perfection. This heifer was also wholly burnt, and the ashes were to be laid up for the use of the congregation, as they might be needed, to mix with the water of purification, when any one who was defiled needed cleansing.

I must here repeat a passage I named to you before, which is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which at once shows you the meaning of all this ceremony: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself, without spot, to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

Here, then, you see, that the "heifer" was meant to signify Jesus Christ; the burning of the heifer showed the cruel death of Jesus Christ; the unclean was meant to signify the sinner; and the sprinkling of the unclean with the water mixed with the ashes of the heifer, the applying of the benefits of Christ's precious blood, to take away the defilement of the soul by sin.

### Moses Smites a Second Rock for Water.

#### NUMBERS XX. 1-13.

THE waters out of the rock of Rephidim, of which you read in the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, had hitherto followed Israel in a stream through the wilderness. They were now stopped, perhaps to try if the new race of Israelites would show a better spirit than their fathers did under the like difficulty; for their fathers were nearly all dead, as God had threatened, and this was now the fortieth year of their travels about the wilderness.

However, just as their fathers murmured, so did these children of Israel; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, or quarrelled with him, and spake, saying, "Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord;" for they thought it a much easier death to die as those did who were probably killed by lightning, or those fourteen thousand seven hundred, who died by pestilence, than it was to die of fatigue and thirst.

Moses and Aaron humbled themselves before God, and prayed to him as they had often done at other times.

In answer to their prayer, the Lord again appeared in the cloud. And Moses was ordered to take his rod and to speak to the rock, which, as God commanded it by Moses, should obey its Creator, and give the people water.

So Moses called the people before the rock, and he said unto them, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Do not you see that Moses said what was very wrong here? He said, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" as though he and Aaron could do it without God's order. How foolish, and humbled, and disgraced he would have been, if God had let him smite the rock in vain! God did not, however, disappoint him; he gave the water as he had promised, but he said, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me," or set apart and show my honor, before "the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

In this chapter we learn that Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died at Kadesh.

And Aaron being stripped of his garments, which were given to his son Eleazar, at the command of God, went up with Moses to the top of Mount Hor, where he died; for God said, "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah."

"And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

# The Brazen Serpent.

NUMBERS XXI. 4-9.

WE find Israel again murmuring about having neither bread nor water, and they seemed never to trust in God but just at the moment when they saw his miracles. This was very wicked; for he had promised to take care of them, and they ought to have believed his word.

The Lord did not now kill the people by lightning, or pestilence, or the sword of their enemies; but he showed that he could do it by many ways, if they continued to rebel against him.

"And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died:" that is, he sent serpents, whose bite was like fire, making a similar wound for pain with that which a

burning coal would make. Serpents of this sort are still found in those parts; but God doubtless made a great many more than usual, to bite this murmuring congregation. And this was a punishment that taught them to see and remember that it was for their crime; for, as they had murmured about water, the burning bites of these animals caused the most cruel thirst, and, without very speedy help, all that were bitten of them must die, so you find great numbers did perish.

Then the people repented and prayed. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live."

This was an odd remedy; but it would try the sincerity of the repentance and faith of the people; it would show if they were now ready to trust God by looking at it, and, if they were cured, they would know that God had sent the fiery serpents, and that the cure was not done by the serpent, but by him.

This serpent had, however, a very important meaning concealed under it, and was a sign of the salvation which a poor sinner obtains who looks in his mind, or by faith, as it is called, to Jesus Christ, who is given to be the Saviour of sinners. The soul is bitten, as it were, by the serpent sin, and, it not cured, it must perish forever; but Jesus Christ said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

### Balaam and his Ass.

#### NUMBERS XXII.

THE Israelites now pitched their tents "in the plains of Moab." And as the Amorites had been conquered by them, and King Og and his sons, and all his people slain, Balak the king of Moab was terribly frightened, and the Moabites thought that the Israelites would "lick" them all up, or destroy them as easily as the ox does the grass in the field.

So what did Balak do, but sent to Balaam, a Midianite prophet, who lived at a place called Pethor. This man pretended to divine, or to know secret things, and it was thought could, by cursing anybody, do him he cursed great harm. However, as he did nothing without money, the king sent some to him by the elders or princes of Moab and of Midian.

If this man had cursed Israel, he could have done them no harm; but

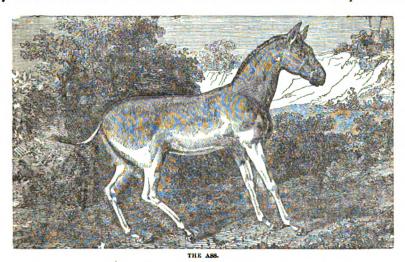
God was so tender of the honor of his people, that he would not allow him even to do this in appearance, and he made him hesitate in his mind what to do.

So Balaam begged the messengers to wait for a night and lodge with him; and then God said to Balaam, perhaps in a dream, "Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed."

And in the morning, Balaam told the princes of Balak that God would not let him go; and they went and told the king that Balaam refused to go with them to curse Israel.

Now, as Balaam did not tell the princes that he was not permitted by the Lord to curse Israel, but only that the Lord refused to let him go to Balak, and as the princes told Balak nothing about God's interference, but only that Balaam would not go, the king thought he would try Balaam again. Perhaps, had he known that Israel's renowned God had interfered, he would have been afraid to try any more.

And now he fancied that, perhaps, he had not paid respect enough to Balaam. So he sent some princes to him, higher in rank than the first, and they told Balaam that if he would curse Israel he should be promoted to



great honor. Balaam, however, said, that if Balak would give him a house full of silver and gold, he could only do what God should bid him. So he begged them to stop for a night, as he did the former messengers, that he might again know what he should do.

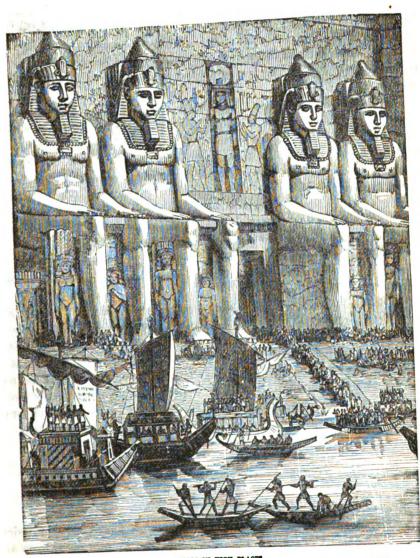
Now Balaam was not a good man, but "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and would have been glad to have had Balak's offered honors and money; but you see how God has the hearts of all men in his hand, and Balaam could do nothing to hurt, or even cast seeming disgrace upon Israel, without God's permission.

When the morning was come, God told him to go with the messengers, and so he saddled his ass and rode off. In this country it is not usual for rich people to ride upon asses, but in those times and in the countries spoken of there were beautiful asses, on which the most distinguished persons rode.

Nothing could be more plain than that Balaam wished to go to Balak and to get his rewards, or he would not have delayed the messengers a second time, when he remembered what God had before told him; and though God told him to go if the men called him, yet he went without being called, which proved that he was quite ready to find any way to get out of his restraint.

So "God's anger was kindled" because Balaam went; "and the Angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him."

An angel is a spirit, and has not flesh and blood as we have. In those times the angels of the Lord often appeared for Israel, but God does not interfere for his people in the same way now, though his care is still shown towards them. Neither Balaam nor his two servants that were with him saw the Angel. But we read, "And the ass saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the Angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side," so that there was no going out into the field, as before, to avoid the Angel, with a stone wall on each side of the path. "And when the ass saw the Angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. And the Angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn. either to the right hand or to the left." And when the ass saw the Angel of the Lord once more, "she fell down under Balaam, and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee. that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine



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hand, for now would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." And then the Angel said to him the words recorded in the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this chapter.

There are two wonderful things here, besides the appearance of the Angel: that the ass should see the Angel when Balaam could not, and that a creature made without the power to speak should open his mouth and reprove Balaam. But the Lord, who afterwards opened the eyes of Balaam, could as easily open the eyes of the ass; and as the ass did not speak of himself, which would, indeed, have puzzled us, but only as the Lord opened his mouth, we know that "with God all things are possible."

After the Angel had reproved Balaam, he was sorry that he had beaten the ass, and offered to go back again, if the Angel wished.

However, seeing that Balaam had evidently a great longing to go, he said he might, but he was to take care what he said. "So Balaam went with the princes of Balak."

As soon as Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him, being both eager to see him and desirous of paying him honor; however, Balaam told him that he could say nothing but what God should permit.

And then Balak offered oxen and sheep in sacrifice to his idols, that he might be successful in cursing Israel; and on the day following he took Balaam into the high places of Baal, where altars were built to the idol so named, and where, from a great height, he might see all the people of Israel, as they were encamped beneath, and so pronounce a curse against them.

## Balak disappointed in cursing Israel.

Numbers xxIII., xxIV.

WHEN Balak and Balaam got upon the high places, Balaam desired Balak to build him seven altars, and prepare him seven oxen and seven rams. And he told Balak to wait by his sacrifice while he went alone to another high place, to see if God would say anything more to him.

And there God met Balaam in some wonderful way, and Balaam boasted

that he had now built his altars, and offered his sacrifices, not to idols, but to God himself. But "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," and he could still get no leave to curse Israel, for though he would have been glad to please Balak, yet God put a restraint upon his spirit and his mouth, and he was obliged to speak what God told him.

So he went back to Balak and took up his parable or speech, and he said, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" And then he foretold that the people should "dwell alone," and the Jews have been a race separate from all other people to this day, though it was more than three thousand years ago when Balaam spoke the prophecy. And he said that their numbers should be very great, which came to pass; and he told of their happiness, and no people on the face of the earth had more reason to be happy, as long as they serve God with all their heart.

Then Balak was very angry and said unto Balaam, "What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether."

However, he thought he would try another place, where Balaam would see only a small part of the people, and that perhaps he would then think less of them.

"And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered," as he had done before. Then Balaam retired again, to see if God would speak to him. And on his return, Balak asked him about what he had heard. And he said to Balak, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he (God) hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." He told him God could not lie or change; that he saw no iniquity in his people Israel, meaning not any that he would punish by cursing them, for God often saw iniquity in them, and chastised them for it. He assured him that God was with his people Israel, and that as their king, he was stronger than any of their enemies; that his strength, as compared with that of all other rulers, was like that of the unicorn, or one-horned rhinoceros, the strongest of beasts, and that no schemes of Balak could harm Israel; and that, as a courageous lion would eat of his prey, and drink the blood of the slain, so Israel should beat all their enemies.

Balak, still more vexed than before, then cried out, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all."

Yet he wished to try once more if Balaam could not get leave to curse Israel, and so he took him to the top of Peor, a high mountain in Moab, and sacrificed again as before.



But Balaam saw that all his enchantments were useless, and he waited on the spot to see what God would now do.

And the Spirit of God came upon him, and opened the eyes of his mind, and he prophesied about Israel. And he foretold their prosperity, by comparing them to well-watered gardens by the water side, and to a flourishing tree, which grew tall, with large leaves at the top, and that without a gardener's aid, the providence of God alone making it grow; and also to cedar trees, which were famous for height and grandeur.

He said also, that Israel should pour water out of his buckets, by which he meant again, that the nation should flourish, as this was a way of watering the land to make its fruits grow; and he spoke of the chief of Israel becoming higher and greater than Agag, the king of the Amalekites, who was then one of the greatest kings in the world. And he further spoke as before, about their overcoming their enemies, like as a lion overcomes his prey.

Then Balak could no longer contain his anger, "and he smote his hands together;" and he "said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these last three times." And he sent Balaam away. Balaam, however, stopped to go on with his prophecy, and he foretold the distant conquest of Moab and Edom, and the ruin of Amalek, and the wasting of the Kenites, and other great events that should take place, and did happen in after times, as God had told him.

Thus you see how God protected Israel from the malice and craft of their enemies, and would not suffer them to receive any harm.

### Various Events a little before the Death of Moses.

#### NUMBERS XXV.-XXXVI.

E shall now pass on to the end of Numbers, and merely glance, as we pass, at what the other chapters contain.

In the twenty-fifth, we find Israel drawn aside to commit idolatry with the Moabites.

And God ordered Moses to hang all the ringleaders, and the judges to slay all the rest of the offenders. And a plague broke out in the camp, and slew twenty-four thousand persons. These probably had some hand in the business, by consenting or counselling the other offenders, and so God visited them also.

Some think there is reason to believe that Balaam advised the Moabites to propose marriages with the Israelites, and as it was against the command of God that such marriages should take place, the Israelites that were guilty of breaking his commandment did very wickedly. And this was a wise command; for, supposing your parents were divided in opinion, and one worshipped God, and the other were stupid enough to worship the ugly idols worshipped by the Hindoos, perhaps you would be in danger of being taught to worship them, and so you would be ruined by God's displeasure, as well as your parents. Besides, those that love God truly can never agree to live all their days with those that show they hate him.

One Zimri, the son of a chief, had, as some think, married a Midianitish princess, who worshipped the false gods of Moab, and he had the audacity to take her to his tent in the presence of the people, who were weeping before God on account of the sins which their brethren had committed.

Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and grandson of Aaron, seeing this audacious act of breaking God's law, instantly acted as magistrate on this occasion, and put God's commandment into execution, by putting the criminal and the princess to death. As this was not an act of private revenge, which would have been murder, but zeal for God's glory, and in obedience to his law, God was pleased with Phinehas, and promised to bless him for what he had done; and, on account of it, he stayed the plague.

As God had punished the Israelites, he visited also the Midianites, and commanded Moses to smite them, that they might not any more lead Israel astray into idolatry.

And God ordered Moses and Eleazar to number the people of Israel; and they found that they were "six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty," that is, as we should say, six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty, who were twenty years old and upwards, all fit for war, besides twenty-three thousand Levites for the service of the Temple.

"But among these, there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai: for the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."

See how God fulfils his threatenings against sinners. You remember that all those that were numbered at Mount Sinai, the first year after Israel

came out of Egypt, rebelled against God; and he declared that they should wander in the wilderness, but never enter Canaan, and so it came to pass.



MOSES.

O then let us obey his commands, lest he swear in his wrath that we shall never enter into his rest.

This numbering is related in the twenty-sixth chapter.

In the twenty-seventh, we have a brief account of the five daughters of Zelophehad, whose father having died in the wilderness, and left no son, were unprovided for in the promised land of Canaan, and they asked permission to take his share, that his name might not be blotted out, and forgotten; and in so doing they showed that they firmly believed in what God had said by his servants—that he would give Canaan to Israel. So God granted them their request; and ever after it was a law in Israel, that if a man died and had no son, then his daughter came in for the inheritance.

In this chapter we also learn that God told Moses to prepare for death. He was to go up to "Mount Abarim and see the land," which God had given to Israel, but he was never to enter it, for you

remember that he offended God, by his anger and haughtiness, when he smote the rock at Meribah. It was, however, a favor to see the land, and

though he was shut out of that, as he had been a faithful servant of God, he would not be shut out forever from the presence and favor of God, which was a better portion than the earthly Canaan.

Moses, still concerned for Israel, now prayed God to appoint another captain, who should still lead them in safety; and God put his spirit in Joshua, and Moses at his command appointed him to be leader before a'l the people.

As the people were now a new generation, Moses was commanded to repeat to them all the laws about making offerings and feasts; and these are therefore given again, in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters; and in the thirtieth chapter are laws to be observed in making vows or promises of anything to be given to God.

In the chapter following, Moses, at God's command, makes war upon the Midianites, by sending out a thousand men of every tribe against them, that is to say, twelve thousand men; and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, went to the war with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow, in his hand.

And they slew all the men, and five kings of Midian, and Balaam the prophet, who was there. And they took the women and children prisoners, and also all their cattle and goods.

And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation of Israel, went out to meet the conquerors on their return; but when Moses saw they had brought the women with them, "he was wroth with the officers of the host," for through the counsel of Balaam, the women had before caused Israel to sin, and drawn them aside to idolatry.

So Moses ordered every boy and every woman to be put to death, but the female children, and the metals, with everything that passes through fire to be purified, were preserved.

This seemed very severe; but God commanded Moses, and "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The women, had they lived, would have made Israel to sin; and the boys, had they grown up to be men, would have avenged the deaths of their wicked fathers and mothers; and so God had them slain.

Then God commanded a tribute to be paid to him, out of the prey taken by the conquerors. And well might they make him an offering of thanksgiving; for on mustering the men, not one man was lacking, or had been lost, though a whole nation had been so completely beaten, and all their cities destroyed.



And the officers collected jewels and gold, to the amount of nearly eight thousand ounces; and Moses and Eleazar laid them up in the Tabernacle, as a memorial, "or remembrance, for the children of Israel before the Lord." So ought we always to bear in mind God's kindness towards us, and our merciful escapes from danger.

In the thirty-second chapter we have an account of the first settlement made by the Israelites, after their long journey through the wilderness. The tents of Israel were now pitched in the plains of Moab, where they had been for some months. The land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of



ERECTING A TENT IN THE EAST.

Og, king of Bashan, remained unoccupied, though conquered by Israel. These lands were fine pasture lands for cattle, and as the children of Reuben and Gad had a very great multitude of cattle, they asked leave of Moses to possess them, instead of having any share in Canaan, or the other side of Jordan.

Moses suspected that

they were indolent and cowardly, and wanted to escape any danger in conquering Canaan, so he reproved them, and told them how God had punished their fathers for such a spirit. But they assured him that he had mistaken their intentions, for all they wanted was to leave their little ones, and their wives, and their flocks, and their cattle, and they were ready to go themselves and assist their brethren in getting their possessions. So when Moses saw that their designs were good, he gave them what they wished, on their promising to do as they had said.

"And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof, in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about." And they built sheep-folds for their cattle, and they rebuilt the cities which were in a ruinous state from the wars; and in this way a part of Israel lived out of Canaan, on the other side Jordan.

In the thirty-third chapter is a history of the removals and encampments of the children of Israel, from the time they left Egypt till they entered into Canaan, forty-two in all, and the chapter ends with a command from God to Moses, to tell the children of Israel to destroy all the idolatrous people of Canaan, and take possession of their land.

In the thirty-fourth chapter God marks out the limits of the promised land.

In the thirty-fifth the children are commanded not to forget to give a possession to the Levites, who were their ministers to perform religious service. These were to have forty-eight cities, six of which were to be cities of refuge, where any person who had accidentally killed another might flee, to escape being slain, and to have a fair trial of his guilt or innocence.

For if any man killed another, the nearest relation of the person who was killed pursued the murderer and put him to death. If, then, a man knew that upon trial he could prove that he had not wilfully killed the person whose life he had unfortunately happened to take away, he could hasten to the City of Refuge; but if he did not, and the avenger of blood overtook him, his blood was upon his own head, because he had neglected to save himself as God had appointed. The meaning of this we shall soon explain to you.

The thirty-sixth chapter settles something more about the daughters of Zelophehad, that they should marry only in the tribe of Manasseh, to which they belonged, so that their inheritance should not go from their father's family into any other tribe.

Thus ends the book of Numbers, containing some most interesting accounts of the perverseness of the Israelites, and the faithfulness and goodness of God towards that wonderful nation.



# DEUTERONOMY.

This title means: "the Law a second time," or "the Law rehearsed;" and it has this name because in it Moses rehearses to the young Israelites who were soon to enter Canaan, the Law given on Mount Sinai amid such terror and solemnity. Their fathers who had witnessed the giving of the Law had all died in the wilderness, and the new generation must be taught to obey it, as well as the ceremonial law. The book has thirty-four chapters.

OSES repeats in this book the laws which God had before given; for the old Israelites, to whom they were first spoken, were all dead in the wilderness, and as the young Israelites were now about to have Canaan, they were to be taught what God expected from them if they were allowed to possess it.

Laws for the Israelites, about Cities of Refuge—Holy Scriptures—The cruel Idol Moloch—Conjurers—Landmarks.

#### DEUTERONOMY I.-XXVIII.

In the first chapters of this book Moses told the Israelites how that God had told them to go and possess the land of Canaan, and how they had murmured when ten, out of the twelve spies, brought them a bad report of the land, and how that God said, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware (or promised) to give unto your fathers, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord." And that the Amorites chased them as bees, and destroyed them for being disobedient to God. And then he told them the story of the Edomites, and of Og, the king of Bashan; and of Sihon, the king of the Amorites; and about their first conquests, and their being given to the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. And also, how God had chosen Joshua to be their leader in Canaan. You can read all these things in the first three

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chapters of Deuteronomy; they are very interesting, and will refresh your memory; they may properly be called An Abridgment of the Travels of the Israelites in the Wilderness.

There is one thing which Moses mentions, and which is not before It is the bedstead of Og, the king of Bashan, from which it is guessed what a big man he must have been. You read of it in the third "For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the giants: behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?" Rabbath was a city in which the kings of the Ammonites lived. "Nine cubits was the length thereof," that is, about four yards and a half long, or more than twice as long as one of our tallest soldiers; "and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man," or the measurement of a cubit from a man's elbow to the end of his litt'e finger, which would make the bedstead about two yards broad, or about the length of a tall man. From the length of his bedstead it is supposed that he must have been eleven feet high, which is as tall again as a commousized man. This was a frightful foe to meet in battle, for warriors did not then fight at a distance with powder and ball, as they do now, but only with spears, and bows and arrows: yet the Israelites, encouraged by their God, slew him, and though he had sixty strong walled cities, and perhaps many tall men in them, as the people seem to have been of large statute, they easily took their cities too, for God was with them.

In the fourth chapter Moses strongly exhorts the people to serve God and keep from idolatry. And then we learn that he "severed three cities on this side of Jordan, toward the sun-rising, that the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in time past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live: namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites."

The roads to these cities of refuge were always kept in good repair, that the man-slayer might easily get to them, if he had killed any one by accident; and there were posts, like our hand-posts at the corner of our roads, to show the way, that no one might lose a moment by being at a stand to know which road to take; and on these posts were the words, in large letters, Refuge, Refuge. The man that fled thither was tried, and if a murderer, he was executed; but if guilty of manslaughter, or killing a man by accident, he lived in the city till the high priest died, when he was allowed to go home again.



After the Israelites conquered Canaan, three other cities of refuge were established on the west side of the Jordan—Kedesh, Shechem and Hebron. This provision of cities of refuge is often used, both in the Old and the New Testament, to illustrate the safety of the sinner who has fled to Christ as a refuge from the destruction threatened by the law of God. The manslayer could not leave the city of refuge until the high priest died; but Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, ever liveth to make intercession for all who flee to him for safety. To him, then, the trembling sinner must "flee from the wrath to come." The way is free and open, and if we "flee for REFUGE to lay hold on the hope" here set before us, we shall never perish,



FLEEING TO THE CITY OF REFUGE.

but have everlasting life. This is the meaning of the city of refuge.

Moses goes on to repeat the Ten Commandments, and what happened at Sinai when God gave them. And he tells the people particularly to love and serve God that it may be well with them. And he does not forget the little children, for he says, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (See the sixth chapter.)

These seem to us to be very odd commands, but they were very likely to make the people and their children remember all about what God did for Israel in saving them from the Egyptians, taking care of them in the wilderness, when they served him, and bringing them to the land of Canaan.

The Jews tied sentences of the law to their wrists, and on their foreheads,

and wrote them in different parts about their houses, that they might remember them; and all this was good: but Jesus blamed the Pharisees for doing so, because they cared not about the words they wrote, but thought that when they had done the thing that was enough; which was a great mistake, for all this should have been done that they might really remember God's word.

All the Scripture given by God, up to that time, was written by scribes, or persons employed to make copies for people, and these laws would have been seen by few amongst so many, but for this way of writing the most striking parts, that all might often read them.

Think, my dear reader, how good is God to you! He sends you the whole Bible, and plenty of copies are now printed, instead of written, and sold cheap, so that the poorest may have them. It was not so, even in England, in former days, for when laborers were paid four cents a day, and the price of a sheep was twentyfive cents, a Bible sold for eightyfive dollars; that is to say, for the value of three hundred and forty This was six hundred sheep. and fifty years ago.

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh



MOLOCH.

his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them (the Canaanites) out from before thee."

The heathen of Canaan worshipped a fancied God, which they called Moloch, and one part of their worship was to make two large fires, and their priests led little children between them, and so marked them as his servants, as many Christians dedicate their children to God in their early childhood, while some leave this to be done by themselves when they

grow up to be men and women. On some occasions the poor children were put into the fire and burnt to death to please their false god, as their parents supposed.

Charmers, which they had, were persons who pretended by certain foolish methods to cure diseases and many other evils. The blacks, in Africa, have bits of paper on which the priests write some words, and these the people wear about them, and think they will save them from being drowned or shot, and from other ills. Some, too, pretend to ask the devil about things, which they want to find out. A wizard was a kind of conjurer, and a necromancer one who pretended to talk with the dead.

There is another thing about which I must tell you, and which you will go back and read about in the nineteenth chapter: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it."

See how particular God was that his people should be honest. The land-mark was then a great stone, which like our stones now, that mark the separation of counties and parishes, then served the purpose of a hedge, and separated lands from each other. If any one was inclined to be dishonest, he could easily remove the stone, and so by degrees get away a good deal of his neighbor's inheritance. This was breaking the law, which said, "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not covet," and God therefore commanded that it should never be done.

In the twenty-cighth chapter there is a remarkable prophecy about the Jews, in which Moses foretells what happened to them many hundred years afterwards. If they should disobey God and forsake him, a foreign enemy should enter their land, which the Romans did at last, who were then a very fierce and powerful nation; their country should be laid waste, and all the fruits of it eaten up by the army of foreigners; their cities should be besieged, or surrounded by their focs to take them, and should fall into their hands; and, among other miseries, the tender and delicate woman even should be so driven by hunger that she should eat her own child, which really happened; multitudes should perish, so that they should become few in number, and when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, there were two millions of Jews that perished by the sword, besides those that died from famine and disease; and, lastly, the remnant, or Jews that remained, should be scattered into all nations; and this, too, has come to pass, for now they do not make a nation living by themselves, as the French,

the English, the Spanish, and others; but though they are still numerous, they live apart, scattered among all people; and there are some in Turkey, in Germany, in Russia, in France, in Spain, in England, in America and in many other countries; a wonderful thing, which has not happened to any other nation in the world. See how true God is to his word, and what a dreadful thing it is to continue obstinately to sin against his commands.

All these things, and many others of a like kind, Moses wrote, and he ordered these laws to be read to all the people at one of their solemn feasts, once in every seven years. None were to be without hearing them; for, said he, "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land, whither you go over Jordan to possess it."

# Moses warned of his Death.—Moses's Song.

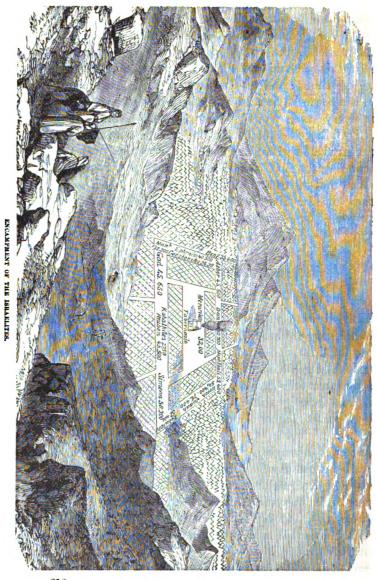
DEUTERONOMY XXXI., XXXII.

THE Lord now told Moses that he soon must die, and he ordered him to write a song or history in verse, that might remind Israel of all that God had done for them, and warn them against the danger of forsaking him and turning to false gods; and this song would, by being often sung, be fixed in the people's memories, and hand down their wonderful history from father to son, and from generation to generation. This song is contained in the thirty-second chapter; a few parts you will, perhaps, want to be explained.

Moses begins by saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain: my speech shall distil as the dew." What he means by this is, that what he should say should be designed to do the people as much good as the rain and the dew bring to the barren earth when they descend upon it.

Then he says God is a rock; that is, God is strong as a rock is strong, and he is immovable as a rock is immovable; that they are safe, indeed, that put their trust in him.

He says also, that with a tender care, like that of an eagle towards her young ones, God had guarded Israel; he made him ride on high or proud places of the earth, as a conqueror on his charger; "he made him to suck



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honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock," meaning that in Canaan he had given him to enjoy that abundance of honey which there was there, and which the bees sometimes made in the rocks, in the holes of which they formed their hives; and oil, also, which was got out of trees found among the rocks.

But he also sings, "Jeshurun"—a name he gives to Israel—"Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;" meaning that when Israel had abundance, then the nations grew proud or insolent, like an overfed beast, that would turn and kick the hand that had fed it.

And now God ordered Moses to go up into Mount Abarim, the highest part of which was Mount Nebo, and here he might see the land of Canaan; but because he had trespassed against God at the waters of Meribah, in the wilderness of Zin, he was never to enter into it.

### Death of Moses.—Joshua becomes Leader of Israel.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII., XXXIV.

MOSES, inspired from Heaven, now blesses Israel, and like Jacob foretells the future lot of the twelve tribes. It would keep us too long to explain all that is here said; you will, however, read, that he said of the tribe of Joseph, "His horns are like the horns of unicorns." Horns, in Scripture, when applied to people, mean power; and as the unicorn is a most powerful animal, Joseph's tribe are thus described as being very strong, so that they shall beat their enemics whenever they assail them.

Again, you will read about Zebulun, that "They shall suck of the abundance of the seas;" for that tribe were to have part of the sea-coast to live upon, and so to fish, and become merchants, by which they should live, as infants live by drawing milk from their mothers' breasts; and Issachar should get support by treasures hid in the sand, perhaps by pearls and corals, which are found there by the sea-side.

Further, Dan is called "a lion's whelp;" meaning that that tribe should be like a lion, springing suddenly and powerfully upon its enemies. Asher must "dip his foot in oil;" that is, the ground to be given to that tribe should be well planted with trees producing oil, so that it should be so abundant, that they might be said to tread in it; as we say sometimes of a rich man, that he rolls in riches, by which we do not mean that he lies down and turns himself over in his heaps of money, but that he has a very

large quantity. Moreover, it is foretold of this tribe, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass;" not that they should have shoes made of iron and brass, for who could wear them on all occasions? but that they should tread upon ground, like our California, where mines of precious metal are in abundance under the feet.

So, further on, you read of God's riding "upon the heaven." This is very grand, and is meant to show us that God manages all the affairs of heaven, and that he directs even the clouds, and the tempests, and the winds, by his providence, with as much ease as a skilful rider manages a noble horse, or a skilful driver his chariot.

You will now, we hope, have a kind of key to unlock the meaning of some expressions of the above kind, which you could not before understand; and when any expression of a similar nature happens to puzzle you, and appear absurd and contradictory, and impossible, only think that it must mean something of what we have just told you, and then the difficulty will be overcome.

And now we come to the death of Moses, which you shall have in the words in which it is described in the Bible: "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

"And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel."

Joshua now became the leader of Israel. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him," to pray to God to give him his spirit, "and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses."

## JOSHUA:

TAKES its name from the plous and brave leader, whose great victories and acts it records, and who succeeded to Moses in the government of the Israelites. It was written by Joshua, and gives a history of about thirty years. In it is shown God's faithfulness, and it seems to be a valuable sequel to the Books of Moses, just as in the New Testament the Acts seem to be to the Gospols. The book is divided into twenty-four chapters.

Joshua passes Jordan.—Joshua meets an Angel.

JOSHUA 1.-V.

FTER the death of Moses, God now commanded Joshua to take possession of the land which he promised that Israel should inherit; and he told him to be of good courage, and only to mind the holy law and obey it, and he should be sure to prosper.

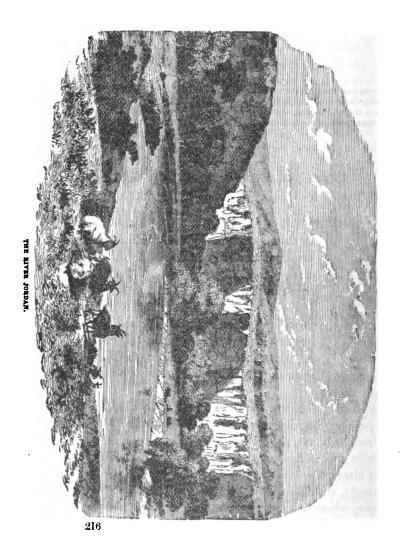
Joshua then gave orders to the officers of the people to provide victuals for marching; and he desired the Reubenites and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had already got their possessions, to join their brethren and

assist in taking the land, which they honorably agreed to do, as they had before promised.

"And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho: and they went and came unto a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there."

A harlot means a very wicked woman, and as persons who kept inns were not always the most moral, they all got this name. But it is reasonably thought, that Rahab was not so bad as the name means, but only an inn-keeper, where these spies went to lodge; for it does not seem likely that good men would, if they could help it, go to lodge with so vile a person as a harlot means, and much less can we suppose that Salmon, a Jewish prince, would afterwards have married such an one; but he did marry Rahab. (See Matt. i. 5.)

The king of Jericho soon learnt that there were spies entered into his



city, and finding out where they were, he sent to Rahab to deliver them up.

However, instead of delivering them up, she hid them. And she said that the men had been there, but they were gone, and if they were pursued, they would soon be overtaken.

Now all this time she knew that the men were on the flat roof of her house, for so the roofs are made in that part of the world; and she had covered them over with stalks of flax, which she had laid upon the roof, to dry in the sun, in order to the beating of it, and making it ready for the wheel—a proof that she was an industrious woman.

We learn in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews that Rahab saved herself and her family by faith. She believed that God would destroy the wicked people among whom she lived, as he had already destroyed the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og; and therefore she would not be guilty of giving up his faithful servants to perish. If this had not been a case quite out of the common way, her conduct in preserving men who were going to destroy her country would have been very wicked, and that of a traitor; but God worked upon her heart, made her kind to the spies, and so prepared the way for Joshua to take Jericho, and to save her and her family.

But, as to the lie which she told, she was to blame, for no one is justified in telling a lie: as it is a wicked thing, we are sure that God did not prompt her to that. This was the means which she thought of to save the men, but God could and would have saved them, without her doing anything so wrong. What can we say for her? Why, she had lived among heathens, and, as yet, knew no better. When she afterwards would live among the Israelites, she would learn that a lie was a very wicked thing.

Having got rid of the king's officers, Rahab went upon the house-top, and made a bargain with the spies, that as she had saved them, they would, in turn, save her and her family, consisting of her father and mother, and brothers and sisters. This was very affectionate on her part, and as she had shown the spies so much kindness, they readily agreed to show kindness to her.

As it would have been dangerous for the spies to have passed through the streets, she "let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall." And she told them to flee to the mountains that were near, and hide there for three days, and by that time the men who were in pursuit of them would be tired, and give up the chase, and then they might safely go home.



The spies were, however, afraid, lest by any mistake, in the hurry of battle, Rahab and her relations should be killed; and therefore, to make here safety more sure, they agreed that she should tie a line of scarlet thread in the window, by which thread they were let down, and that all her family should be brought together under her roof, and no one should dare to venture into the street, or, if he did, his blood should be upon his own head, that is, his death would be his own fault, and not theirs. She was, also, faithfully to keep everything secret which had happened, or to lose their protection.

So the men hid in the mountains three days, when their pursuers returned; and they got safe back and told Joshua what had taken place, and what they had heard from Rahab, that the people had heard of Israel's victories, and were afraid of them. "And they said unto Joshua, truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

The next morning Joshua prepared to set off for Jericho. And he came to Jordan with all Israel, and after three days the officers went through the host, and desired them to follow the ark of the covenant, which the Levites should carry before them. This ark was a sign of God's presence amongst them, and that he was their chief guide. They were to keep at the distance of two thousand cubits or three thousand feet, a little more than half a mile, so that the priests and Levites who bore the ark might not be crowded, and the ark itself could be seen more distinctly by the whole people than if they all crowded close to it.

So the day following, the priests and the Levites "took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people."

And God told Joshua that he would now honor him by a wonderful miracle, which should show Israel that he had chosen him to lead Israel, as he had before chosen Moses.

And Joshua told Israel what God would do for them, and that, as soon as the priests who bore the ark should touch the brink of the river with their feet, the waters of Jordan should stand upon an heap on one side, so as not to flow down their channel; while those on the other side should continue running without any fresh supply; and so the bed, or bottom of the river, should be dry for Israel to pass over, as the Red Sea had before been for their fathers with Moses. Joshua also ordered twelve men to be selected, perhaps to go near and witness this miracle, for the entire satisfaction of the rest.

So the priests moved forward and stood in Jordan; and the waters dried up as Joshua had foretold, although this happened at the time of harvest, when the river overflowed its banks, from the great quantity of water; which made the miracle the more wonderful. "And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

The number of the Israelites at this time was six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, which was, indeed, a vast army; yet it is wonderful that the Canaanites did not watch them and try to stop their crossing of Jordan. But perhaps they thought they could not pass the river where they did; and if they saw that the waters yielded to make way for them, it was quite enough to frighten them, alarmed as they already were, and to make them run away wherever they could for safety.

It is usual, in all countries, to erect monuments and statues to commemorate great historical events; thus we have the Bunker Hill monument in Charlestown, Mass.; the Lincoln and Washington monuments in New York; the Washington and Battle monuments in Baltimore; the statues in Washington, monuments in Richmond and Lexington, Va., etc.

The passing over Jordan by the Israelites was one of these events which deserved commemoration, and Joshua, therefore, commanded twelve men, one from each tribe, and probably the same men spoken of before, to take twelve stones from the spot where the priests' feet had stood and to carry them to their first lodging-place over Jordan, where they were to leave them. And so, when at any future time their children should ask, "What mean you by these stones?" they should be told "that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over Jordan, and that the stones were a memorial unto the children of Israel forever."

Joshua also set up twelve other stones "in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bore the ark of the covenant stood;" and there they were when the Book of Joshua was written.

All the people having passed over, including the children of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who passed over before the rest, being about forty thousand prepared for war, Joshua then ordered the priests to come out of Jordan, and its waters immediately flowed as before. So "On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel," and owned him as his servant appointed to lead Israel; "and they feared (or honored) him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life."

And the people encamped in a place which they called Gilgal, in the cast borders of Jericho, where the twelve stones brought out of the river were pitched, "That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty;" and so fear the Lord God of Israel forever.

The drying up of Jordan must have been seen for some miles, and the news of the wonderful event, with the passage of the Israelites, soon spread among the Canaanites and filled them with the greatest alarm, "neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

And God now commanded Joshua to mark the Israelites of the new generation with the sign of his covenant with them, and they kept a solemn passover, which they had been denied in their wanderings in the wilderness. The country people naturally fled away from the invading armies, and all their corn in the field and in store became the property of the Israelites, who took it and fed upon it, as part of their promised possession, given them by that God who caused it to grow; and having no more need of manna, that miraculous supply of food ceased, and "they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."

The fifth chapter closes with an account of a wonderful appearance to Joshua. The person who appeared to him while he was, perhaps, thoughtfully looking around Jericho and contriving how to take it, was no common being, or he would not have worshipped him; and from the command to take off his shoe, which was an act of reverence, it was that Angel who appeared in the burning bush to Moses. He now told Joshua that he had come as Captain of the Lord's host, and Joshua might well be encouraged with the assurance that God would fight for him, and give him the promised land for his people.

#### The Taking of Jericho.

Joshua vi.

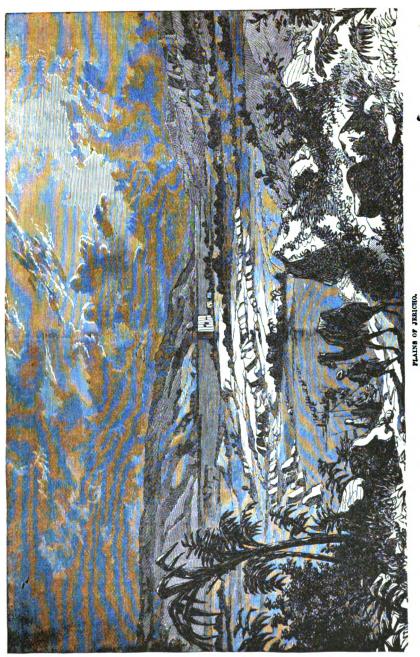
WHEN the people of Jericho saw the armies of Israel coming, they shut up the strong gates of their city; but though this would have preserved them from usual danger, yet now that God had given them up to Israel, nothing could save them.

But the city was to be taken in a very wonderful way, to show that, after all, the hand of God was in it.

Joshua had no orders to batter it, or scale its walls. The men of war were only to march round it once a day for six days; and the ark was to be carried round, and seven priests were to march before it, blowing seven



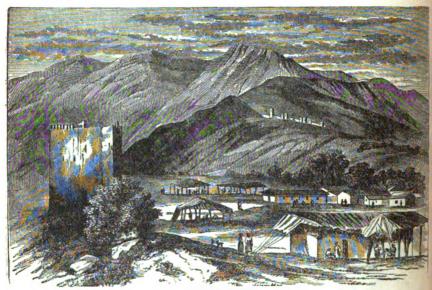




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trumpets of rams'-horns. And on the seventh day they were to walk round the city seven times, and the priests were to blow with their trumpets: and at a long blast of the trumpets the people were to make a loud shouting, when the wall of the city should fall down flat, and every man could get in without difficulty.

So the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and a number of people followed the ark, and they marched round the city daily, till the seventh day. Then Joshua gave the word, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city." And he commanded that everything should be



MODERN JERICHO

destroyed in the city, except Rahab and her family, and the valuable metals that might be found, which were to be preserved for sacred uses.

And when the people shouted, down fell the wall, and then the Israelites marched in, "and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."

The city was also burnt with fire, but Rahab and her family were, by order of Joshua, saved by the spies, who took them without the camp, and she ever after lived with the Israelites.

#### The Sin of Achan.

JOSHUA VII.

ALTHOUGH the Israelites had been warned at their peril not to touch any part of the spoils of Jericho, yet one was so overcome by his covetous spirit that he ventured, in spite of God's command.

This sin was, however, soon found out; for Joshua sent men to view Ai, another city, about twelve miles from Jericho. And when they returned, they told him that the people were fled, and that the city would be easily taken; so that if he sent two or three thousand men against it, that would be quite enough.

And Joshua did so, but the men of Ai rushed out of the city, put them to flight, and killed thirty-six of their number. This frightened Israel, for they thought that, after what had happened to Jericho, the other people of Canaan would take their revenge, and their hearts lost all courage, and became as weak as water.

Then Joshua rent or tore his clothes, as the Jews did when they were in great grief, and he and the elders of Israel put dust upon their heads, and fell with their faces before the ark of the Lord, to prove how much they felt humbled before God. And Joshua pleaded with God to save Israel.

Then God told Joshua, in some way, that Israel had sinned, and had taken what was accursed, and ought not to have been saved, and this was the reason why they could not stand before their enemies.

And God ordered Joshua to tell the people to sanctify or wash themselves, to appear decently on the solemn occasion, and to take the tribes of Israel, and find out who had been the thief; and after casting lots it was discovered that Achan, of the tribe of Judah, was the man.

Then Achan confessed his sin, and he said, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment," which some think was, most likely, the king of Jericho's royal robe, "and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

"So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in the tent, and the silver under it." And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord.

"And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

"And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones."

## The Taking of Ai.

Joshua VIII.

OD now encouraged Joshua to go and take Ai, the inhabitants of which were to perish, like those of Jericho.

So Joshua took all the people of war with him, and chose out thirty thousand brave men, who marched by night to lie in wait behind the city.



And in the morning he himself went up with a body of men, and appeared before the city; and he set another body of men, to the number of five thousand, to lie in ambush, or concealed, near where the first body was hidden.

And Joshua retired into a neighboring valley. And when the king of

Ai saw the number of his men which he exposed, and was not aware that any were hidden, he marched boldly out to attack them. Joshua and those that were with him then ran away, and the king of Ai supposing that they did so in earnest, pursued them, and all the men of Ai joined the army, and thought that now they should ruin Israel forever.

Joshua having drawn them all out of the city, made a sign with his spear which was known to those that were concealed, and as the gates of the city were left open, they rushed in and set some of it on fire.

The men of Ai happening to look behind, saw the smoke, and they were so frightened that they knew not which way to run. Then Joshua turned upon them; and those in the city ran out and attacked them on the other side, and they "let none of them remain or escape." So that day there fell full twelve thousand, even all the men and women of Ai.

And Joshua finished the burning of Ai after taking the cattle and the spoil, and the king of Ai he hanged on a tree till the evening, when the body was taken down, according to the custom of the Jews, and was thrown on the ground at the entrance to the city, and a great heap of stones raised over it, in memory of the event.

"Then Joshua built an altar unto the God of Israel in Mount Ebal," and there the people offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings unto the Lord, in thankfulness to him for the good land into which he had brought them.

#### The Gibeonites saved by Craft.

JOSHUA IX.

ALARMED at the successes of Joshua against Jericho and Ai, all the kings of Canaan now joined together to fight him.

But the inhabitants of Gibeon, which was supposed to have been the capital of the *Hitties*, thought it better to try and make friends with a people that they might vainly hope to withstand. But what were they to do? They, no doubt, understood that the Israelites gave no quarter to the Canaanites, so they resolved to go to them as strangers from a very far country. Some think it would have been better if they had honestly thrown themselves on their mercy, than have practised deceit. However, of this we know nothing. They tried a trick, and it, in part, succeeded. They lived only about twenty-four miles off from where the tents of the Israelites were pitched, and must soon have been destroyed by them.

So they dressed up men like ambassadors from a far country, and they took with them old sacks, to make the Israelites believe that they had carried a deal of provision with them for a long journey; and wine bottles, which were made of goat-skins, and not of glass as ours are, and these were "old, and rent, and bound up," as if they had tried every method to make them hold their liquor to the last; and old shoes or sandals for the soles of the feet, which they had patched, to make it appear that they had walked very far in them by the side of their asses; and old garments worn as by long travelling; and lastly, mouldy bread.

And as soon as they arrived at the camp of Israel, they saw Joshua, and they told him they had come a great way, and wanted him to make a league with them, that is, an agreement to be friends. The men of Israel seemed rather to suspect them, and hinted that they probably dwelt near, and then how could they make a league with them, for they knew that God had said (Deut. vii. 2), "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them."

Being challenged as Canaanites, they made no answer, but turned to Joshua, whom they found out to be the chief, and they said, "We are thy servants."

Joshua then asked, "Who are ye? and whence come ye?" And they told Joshua that they had heard of all the fame of the God of Israel, and what he had done in Egypt, and to the kings Sihon and Og, cunningly saying nothing about Jericho and Ai, as if they knew nothing about Canaan. And they added, that their people being desirous of uniting with them had ordered them to undertake the long journey to get their consent. And then they showed Joshua the old rubbish they had got with them, and, to deceive him, they said, "This, our bread, we took hot for our provision, out of our houses, on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy. And these bottles of wine which we filled were new; and, behold, they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old, by reason of the very long journey."

So the Israelites then "took of their victuals," which was an act of friendship, and it is so considered among the people of Asia to this day, and those who eat even salt together feel themselves bound, by a perpetual covenant or engagement, to be faithful to each other. In doing this they placed themselves in a great difficulty; for, Joshua having made peace with the Gibeonites, and the princes of the congregation having taken their oath that they should live—if they had put them to death, they would have

broken their oath, and this would have been very wicked; and yet, in sparing them, they had spared a people whom God had appointed to-destruction, and Israel were to be his executioners. However, there was this excuse for them, that they did not spare them as Canaanites, as they thought that they were of another country.

In three days only, the Israelites found out that the Gibeonites had cheated them, and that they lived close by them. Liars will, sooner or later, be detected. But as the Israelites had promised to spare their lives, the princes or chiefs did so; and when they came to the four cities which belonged to their people, "they smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel."

The congregation murmured at this, for they were not all engaged in the matter, and it is feared that some of them were displeased that they could not get the plunder. However, the chiefs quieted the people, and punished the Gibeonites by making slaves of them all the days of their lives.

They were obliged to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, which was reckoned a very degrading employment. So they hewed wood and drew water for the use of the people, and particularly for the service of the Tabernacle; and twelve hundred years after, their descendants were still the servants of Israel.

The Five Kings defeated and executed.—The Sun and Moon stand still for Joshua.

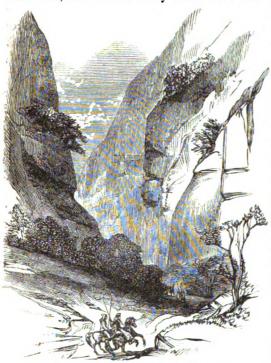
JOSHUA X. 1-27.

AFTER the people of Gibeon had united with Israel, Adonizedek, who was the king of Jerusalem, "sent to Hoham, king of Hebron, and unto Piram, king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia, king of Lachish, and unto Debir, king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

So the kings united with Adonizedek, and marched against Gibcon. And when the people saw so great an army against them, they were again in a fright, and they sent off to Joshua with all speed, saying, "Come up to usquickly, and save us, and help us."

Now, as Joshua had given his word, he would not kill the Gibeonites, and he would not, if he could help it, let others kill them. So he marched all night to Gibeon, with all his army, and God told him to fear nothing.

After his march up the rugged hills from Gilgal to Gibeon, Joshua commenced the battle with the army of the five kings, very early in the morning, and by eleven o'clock they were in full retreat, down the steep slopes of Beth-horon the nether, toward the valley of Aijalon. Here they were overtaken by that terrible hailstorm (verse 11), which made their flight an utter rout, and killed many more than the Israelites had slain. At this



PASS AT WHICH JOSHUA DEFEATED THE FIVE KINGS

moment, Joshua, standing upon the summit west of Gibeon, not yet reached by the storm, fearing that they might escape, uttered that ejaculation for Divine help, which showed his strong faith: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Aijalon;" God granted his prayer; the day was prolonged; the hailstorm, having done its work, rolled away, and daylight lasted till the Israelites overtook the foe, drove them about fifteen miles through mountain passes, and made an end of them at Azekah. As these Amorites worshipped the sun and moon, it must have terrified them to see that these heavenly bodies

were enlisted against them. Just how, and for what length of time, this day was prolonged, we know not. It may have been by a refraction of the sun's rays, or by a meteor, or a mock-sun; but, in some way, the daylight was lengthened, Joshua's prayer answered, and Israel's enemies destroyed.

The five kings being entirely routed, hid themselves in a cave at Mak-kedah, where the Israelites found them. And Joshua said, "Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave," so as to make them prisoners, "and set men by it for to keep them. And stay you not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them: suffer them not to enter into

their cities, for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand. And it came to pass when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter till they were consumed," so that none but stragglers were left here and there, and no army remained, "that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities."

The people now returned to the camp, and Joshua ordered the kings to be brought out of the cave. And he desired his captains to come and put their feet upon the necks of the kings, which was an encouragement to them to show them that these were but the beginnings of victory, and that so they should trample under feet all the wicked idolaters of Canaan, till they had got the whole land for a possession as God had promised.

And then Joshua smote them and slew them, "and hanged them on five trees;" and in the evening they were taken down and put into the cave in which they had hid, and great stones were put before the cave, and there the bodies remained when the book of Joshua was written.

## The Land divided by Joshua among the Tribes.

#### Joshua XIII.-XIX.

THE whole land was not yet conquered; for God said to Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken," or grown, "in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

Now, as Joshua was old, he was not required to fight any more, but to leave others to do this, and he was only to divide the lots or portions among the people of Israel, and so there could be no quarrelling amongst themselves after his death, about what parts they should have.

Among the portions, he was to give land that was not yet conquered; but what God promises he always performs, and the children of Israel were to take his word, as though the thing were done.

Caleb was one of the twelve spies, and he contradicted the timid spies that would have made the people afraid of taking Canaan.

In the fourteenth chapter we find him asking Joshua for a particular portion which Moses had granted to him for his pious confidence in God. For Moses had said, "Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God." Caleb, with gratitude, said—that God had preserved him to enjoy that lot, and though he had come to be eighty-five



years old, yet he was still ready to fight in his righteous cause, and God had made him strong enough to drive out the enemy, though the land he desired was inhabited by some of the most mighty.

And Joshua blessed him for his faith in God, and gave him Hebron, as he desired, for an inheritance.

And afterwards we read that Caleb conquered Hebron, and "drove thence the three sons of Anak."

Then he had to take Debir, or Kirjath-sepher. And he offered a reward to the captain who should take it, which reward was the gift of his daughter as a wife. This was a great honor. Supposing a great nobleman were to say that he would allow any person of lower rank to marry his daughter, on condition of his doing something that he wished him: it would just be the same kind of privilege as Caleb here offered; for Caleb was the chief prince of the tribe of Judah, and to become his son-in-law was a great honor. Well, "Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb," took the city, and so he married Achsah, Caleb's daughter, who was his first cousin, and to whom, it is supposed, he wished before to be united, and therefore he bravely went and took the city out of regard for her. This Othniel was, some years after, made a judge or governor of Israel.

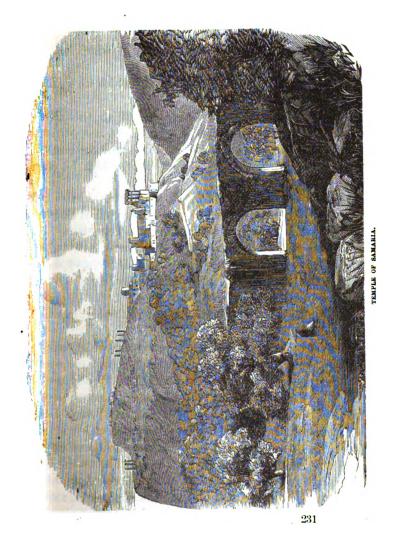
The fifteenth chapter marks out very carefully the lot of the tribe of Judah—all the cities, and towns, and villages, and countries, granted to the people of that tribe; but it is said they could not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, who continued there when the Book of Joshua was completed.

It was in the country of this tribe that Jesus was afterwards born; that is, in Bethlehem of Judea.

The sixteenth and seventeenth chapters mark out the lot of the tribes of the children of Joseph—Manasseh and Ephraim.

In the lot of the tribe of Ephraim was Rama, the city of Samuel, called in the New Testament Arimathea, where Joseph belonged, who took care of the burial of Jesus. Shiloh also was here, where the Tabernacle was first set up. A palm tree, under which you will by-and-by read that Deborah judged or governed Israel, was in the land of this tribe. Samaria, a famous city, was also here; and Jacob's well, where Christ talked with the woman of Samaria.

In the eighteenth chapter we find the Tabernacle, which had been often pitched and removed with the camp of Israel, fixed in Shiloh, a city in the lot of Ephraim, and lying in the centre of the country now belonging to Israel, that Israel might meet there to worship God. And at Shiloh it



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remained for three hundred and twenty-five years, till the sin of the house of Eli, a priest, caused it to be removed.

Seven tribes were yet unprovided for, and Joshua sent out three men from each tribe to view the land, and when they returned, he divided it amongst them.

Benjamin's lot included Jericho and Gilgal, of which we have read. Bethel was also here, and Gibeon.

Simeon's lot included Beersheba and Ziklag, of which we shall read when we come to the history of David.

In Zebulun's lot was Mount Carmel, in which Elijah, the prophet, afterwards put to shame the priests of Baal. Here also was Nazareth, where Jesus spent so much time when he was upon earth, and the coast of the sea of Galilee, where he preached, and Mount Tabor, which he often visited, and consecrated by his prayers.

In Issachar's lot was Jezreel, where was afterwards Ahab's palace, and also Shunem, where lived the Shunammite that entertained Elisha, and the mountains of Gilboa, on which Saul and Jonathan were slain.

In Asher's lot was no famous place, but very near it were the famous. Tyre and Sidon, of which we often read in the Bible, and some suppose that the Canaanites took refuge there when they were driven out of Canaan.

In the lot of Naphtali stood Capernaum and Bethsaida, in which Christ did so many mighty works.

Lastly, to the lot of Dan fell the rich country near which was the valley of Eshcol, where the spies gathered the famous bunch of grapes.

And now Joshua had a right to some portion for himself, and he chose Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim, which was in possession of his own tribe, and near to Shiloh, where the ark was, and near which Joshua loved to dwell; for the good man always loves the spot where God is worshipped. So Joshua built the city which had been broken down, and dwelt therein, and it doubtless afforded him an agreeable home while he lived, with such an income as would furnish him all the comforts needed in his position; and also a burial place, as we find in the book of Joshua, xxiv. 30. He had asked for the portion referred to, as we read in Joshua xix. 50.\*



<sup>\*</sup> For many observations on the last two chapters, the author is indebted to Matthew Henry.

# Three more Cities of Refuge.—Cities given to the Levites.—Return of the two Tribes and a half.—Death of Joshua.

#### JOSHUA XX.-XXIV.

YOU recollect that Moses had set apart three cities on the other side Jordan, for cities of refuge, called Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan, and now Joshua fixes on three other cities in the land of Canaan. As I have already told you about these cities, I need only name those added by Joshua and the princes of Israel. "And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba (which is Hebron) in the mountain of Judah."

No part of the country had as yet been given to the Levites, and now forty-eight cities were divided amongst them out of the lots of all the tribes.

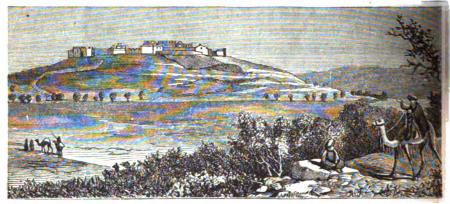
You recollect also that an army of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, had left their lands on the other side Jordan, that they might help their brethren in conquering Canaan, and having honorably kept their word, as all good men will do, Joshua now sends them home, charging them to love the Lord, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments. "And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them. And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver and with gold, and with brass and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

You see that nothing is lost by serving God; for this war was under his command, to punish the wicked nations of Canaan, and in doing it, the Israelites had obeyed the divine will.

When the tribes that were sent home reached the river Jordan, which they had to cross, they built a great altar, probably on their own side, which they intended should be a monument for future times, to remind their children, and their brethren's children, of the other tribes, that they all served the one true God and not the gods of the heathen.

"And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed (or became) old and stricken (or advanced) in age." So he sent for all the chief men of Israel, and he exhorted them, as they would be safe and happy, that they would all obey and serve God. And he again gathered together all the

heads of the tribes of Israel, and he told them of all that God had done for them in old time; and what he had done in Canaan, where he had sent the hornets, or great wasps, to sting and drive out their enemies, instead of their always slaying them with the sword; and where he had given them a land full of fruit without their labor, and cities and houses to live in, which they And Joshua entreated them to serve so good a God, and had never built. told them that if they served strange gods it would be to their hurt. the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." So Joshua made a covenant, or solemn agreement, with the people that day, that they would serve God with all their hearts. wrote their promise in a book, and set up a great stone, under an oak, near the sanctuary of the Lord, that it might be a witness to remind them of what they had promised to do, and that they might see it as often as they went to worship: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord,



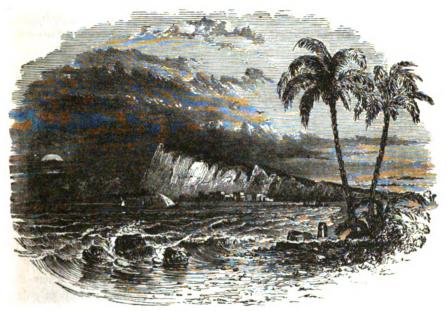
MOUNT EPHRAIM, THE BURIAL PLACE OF JOSHUA.

which he spake unto us." A stone, indeed, could not hear; but Joshua meant, that it was there when he spoke to Israel, and, as it would stand for some ages, it should be as good a witness as if it knew every word that was spoken, inasmuch as his own hand had set it up on the occasion. "It shall be, therefore," said he, "a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash."

About this time the bones of Joseph, which had been brought out of Egypt, were buried "in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob had bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver, and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

Now, too, Eleazar the priest, and "the son of Aaron, died, and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in Mount Ephraim."



VIEW NEAR MOUNT EPHRAIM.

We may here remark that the portion of the Ephraimites was one of a very extensive and productive kind, extending, as it did, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, north of the portions of Dan and Benjamin, and including such places as Shiloh, Shechem, etc. The range, of which Mount Ephraim is part, runs through it, and is known generally by the term of "the mountains of Ephraim,"—the same which, further south, after entering the portion of Judah, are called "the mountains of Judah."

# JUDGES:

So styled by reason of its telling the history of the Israelites under thirteen judges, who governed from the time of Joshua to that of Eli; and who in times of peace administered justice, and in times of war led the soldiers of the nation against their enemies. The date and authorship of the book are not certainly known, although the former is fixed at the time of Saul's reign, and the latter is attributed to Samuel. The book is divided into twenty-one chapters.

King Adonibezek punished.—Ehud judges King Eglon.—Shamgar kills the Philistines with an Ox-goad.

JUDGES I., II., III.

ERE Judges do not mean such judges as we have, who are only to sit in courts of law, and see that justice is done to those who are tried before them; but, as said at the head of the chapter, the judges of the Israelites were rulers and chiefs, and, when the Israelites were in distress because of the attacks of the Canaanites which yet remained, the Lord raised up these men to deliver Israel and lead them to battle.

Some time after the death of Joshua, and when the Israelites were more in number, they asked counsel of the Lord about going to battle to get more of the land from the Canaanites which remained. And God commanded Judah to attack them.

Judah then got the tribe of Simeon to join with them, and promised to help them to make them stronger in return, when they needed aid.

The Canaanites were soon beaten, and king Adonibezek was taken prisoner. This king must have been a great conqueror, but now he is conquered, and as he had done to others, so God now suffered it should be done to him. He had no less than threescore and ten, that is, seventy kings, who were his prisoners, and these he used to feed with the fragments, while they sat under his table, having first cruelly mangled them by cutting off their thumbs and their great toes. What he had done to them the Israelites now did to him, which was, no doubt, an act of God's justice, or else such cruelty would have been very wicked. The king himself felt that God had

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done this: "And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusa lem, and there he died."

Judah's part of Jerusalem was now completely conquered, a king of which city Joshua had before taken. The tribe of Judah also took Hebron, and Gaza, and Askelon, and Ekron, and other places.

We have said that Judah's part of Jerusalem was conquered, for this city stood partly in the lot of Judah, and partly in the lot of Benjamin, and Judah had only taken their own part, which was the southern part, but the northern part they left for the tribe of Benjamin to conquer, but they did not drive out the Jebusites who dwelt there; and there they remained when the Book of Judges was written.

Then the house of Joseph took Bethel, part of which belonged to Benjamin, and the other part to Ephraim. The tribe of Manasseh were very indolent, and left the Canaanites to hold several cities in their lot. Ephraim, also, neglected Gezer, a large city, and left the Canaanites to dwell there. Zebulun were alike careless about enlarging their lot, and only made the Canaanites in it to pay them some taxes for letting them alone. As for those of Asher they even dwelt among the Canaanites, and let them hold their lot. Naphtali did the same, except that they made the people pay them something for remaining quiet. Dan was forced into the mountains, and durst not go into the valleys given to them.

We shall see, by-and-by, what the Israelites got by their cowardice and neglect in taking the whole of the lots which Joshua had given them, and what miseries they brought upon themselves by living among the Canaanites.

Now, when Israel "took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods," the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel—that is to say, he treated Israel as one would treat another when his anger is hot; though, as I think I have before told you, God cannot be moved with anger, and sin as we do.

Well, to show Israel how much he was displeased, he sold them, or parted with them, so as no longer to take special care of them, and let the king of Mesopotamia rule over them, which he did for eight years. But when they found that he treated them very cruelly, then they cried to the Lord, and he was so kind that he pitied them, though they had behaved so ill towards him, and he gave his spirit to Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger

brother, "and he judged Israel and went out to war," and God delivered Israel from the cruel king, and "the land had rest forty years."

After Othniel, the first judge, was dead, "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord."

God now "strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel." And he smote Israel, and the people served him eighteen years.

Then Israel cried to God again, and O what a God is he to hear prayer! for when they prayed to him in earnest,—which is what is meant by crying to God,—then he raised up another deliverer. This was "Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed," or, as some suppose, who could use his left hand as well as his right.

This Ehud was sent from the children of Israel to take a present, or, as it is thought, to take the taxes which Eglon had made Israel pay. So Ehud



TOMB OF THE JUDGES.

made a dagger of two edges, as long as his arm, and he put it under his garments, on his right thigh. The sword is mostly put on the left side, but that is for the purpose of being drawn by the right hand; here it was put to be drawn by his left hand; and perhaps he might bind it for the use of his left hand, to escape any observation that he wore one. When Ehud had offered the present, he sent away the people that were with him, and then going back, he said to the king, "I have a secret errand for thee, O

king." The king thought he had something very important to say, and commanded all to be silent, and then sent his state-servants away. was in a lonely room, built for the sake of quiet, and made very airy and cool, to use in the summer, in that part of the world where it is so hot. Then Ehud went near to him and said, "I have a message from God unto thee." The king rose to receive him with respect, and at that moment he ran him through the body, and being a very fat man, he fell heavily and died, yet no one heard what had happened. Ehud now shut the doors and locked them, and took the key, and passing quietly by the guards, he escaped. The servants now returned to attend the king, but, finding the doors fast, they thought the king was asleep. "He covereth his feet," said they; for, as they wore slippers, when they went to sleep on a sofa, they dropped them, and wrapped them round in the tail of their long garment. At length, however, after waiting a very long time, the servants feared that all was not right, and having got a key they opened the doors, "And, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth."

All this time Ehud was getting safely away, and, having escaped to his people, he blew a trumpet in Mount Ephraim, and he said to the children of Israel that came to him, "Follow after me; for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands." Now the Moabites had probably placed soldiers among the Israelites to keep them in slavery; so the Israelites went to the fords of Jordan, or places where they must pass home, and as the Moabitish soldiers were trying to return home on hearing of the death of their king, Ehud slew them. "And they slew of Moab, at that time, about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valor; and there escaped not a man" of all that had been oppressing Israel. "And the land had rest fourscore (or eighty) years."

For any man now to do what Ehud did it would be murder; but he was the man whom God raised up to punish a wicked king, and act as his judge; and God showed his approval of what he did by saving Israel through his deed.

After Ehud "was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philis; tines six hundred men with an ox-goad: and he also delivered Israel."

Some think that Shamgar was only a commander under Ehud, and not a judge. He was, however, a brave man. The Philistines were very trouble-some neighbors to the Israelites, and plundered them wherever they could get at them, so that, in the fifth chapter, we read that in the days of Shamgar, "the highways were unoccupied;" that is, people were afraid of going

on the great roads, lest they should meet the Philistine robbers, "and the travellers walked through bye-ways," or roads not generally used.

Shamgar, like most of the Israelites, was engaged in working his fields, when some of the Philistines came, perhaps, to take away his crops. So Shamgar and his companions fought them, relying upon God for strength to drive them away; and he, being a strong man, seized an ox-goad, which used to be about three yards long, with an iron pike at one end to drive the ox, and a sharp spade at the other end, to clean the plough. With this he himself slew six hundred men; they having, no doubt, soon taken flight, and been pursued by Shamgar and his friends. This courageous defence delivered Israel from these robbers.

# Deborah and Barak judge Israel.—Jael kills Sisera.—Song of Deborah and Barak.—Gideon's Exploits and Death.

JUDGES IV.-VIII.

AND the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord when Ehud was dead."

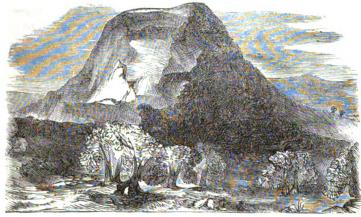
As former punishment did not cure the children of Israel, they were made slaves, and obliged to work to pay heavy taxes to a foreign king called Jabin, who reigned in a place called Hazor, and he was very powerful, "for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel."

So God raised up Deborah a prophetess, a woman to whom he gave his Spirit to foretell things. And, when Israel again cried unto the Lord, she foresaw their deliverance. And she sent for Barak, and told him to command the armies, and what he should do, and how God would help him. So at her desire he collected "ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun," and at Barak's request she went with them to direct them, because God had given her so much wisdom.

Now Sisera, the chief general, or commander-in-chief of the armies of Jabin, soon heard what Barak was doing, and he collected all his chariots of iron, nine hundred in number, and a large army of foot-soldiers; and he thought probably that he could surround the Israelites, who were on the Mount Tabor.

Jewish writers say, that when Barak saw the large army of Jabin, he was quite frightened, but Deborah encouraged him, and said, "This is the

day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand." So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. "And the Lord discomfited (or defeated) Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword, before Barak;" so that, in order to get



MOUNT TABOR.

away faster, "Sisera lighted down off his chariot and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host." "And all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left."

Sisera ran away from his army, and, being invited by a woman named Jael, he hid himself in her tent, and "she covered him over with a mantle or cloak."

As soon as Sisera was asleep, Jael took a long nail, which was used in fastening the tent, and she boldly drove it into his temples, so as to fasten his head into the ground.

Barak was seeking after Sisera, but could not find him. At last he came near Jael's tent, and she ran to meet him, and told him she would show him his enemy; and there lay the general dead, with the nail driven through his head.

And now the Israelites were resolved to rid the country of this tyrant of Canaan. "And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin, king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan."

Then, according to the custom of the times, the conquerors made a song

of victory to sing of the defeat of Sisera; and that this deliverance might not be forgotten, but be remembered as in a history. You may read this song in the fifth chapter of Judges.

Again we find Israel doing evil, "and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." And the Israelites were so cruelly treated that they left their towns, and went and hid in caves or hollow places in the rocks. For, when they had sown their land, the Midianites wantonly destroyed the crop, and left no food for man or beast.

Now, Israel cried again to God; and God sent a prophet to the children of Israel, to tell them of their sins in forsaking him, and to cheer them. And an angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, the son of Joash, as he threshed wheat by the wine-press, that the Midianites might not find it out. "And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?"

And Gideon asked for some sign, that he might be sure he was right in trying to become a judge of Israel. Then he went and got something for the angel to eat, not knowing that he was an angel, as he looked like a man. And when he brought out a kid and some cakes, the angel told him to put them on a rock which was close by, and he touched them with a staff, which he had in his hand, and fire came out of the rock and consumed them.

Then the angel vanished away, and Gideon knew by this sign that he was not a man.

Gideon was now frightened, and he thought as he had seen an angel that he should die, but God spoke to his mind, "Thou shalt not die." And Gideon was then satisfied, and built an altar to praise God, and he called it Jehovah-shalom, which means, The Lord peace; or, as we understand it, "The Lord send peace."

On the same night God commanded Gideon to throw down his father's altar, built to the false god, Baal; and to cut down the grove that was planted round it, and to build an altar to him, and sacrifice his father's bullock upon it. So Gideon did so by night, and took ten of his father's servants to help him.

In the morning the men of the city saw what Gideon had done, but they did not know who did it. And at last they found out that it was Gideon, and they were very angry, and wanted to kill him. But Gideon's father said, "Let Baal kill him if he can, but do not you kill him;" and you



THE PLEECE OF GIDEON

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know that a wooden god could not, and so his father saved his life; and he called his name, after that, Jerubbaal, which means, let *Baal plead*, that is, let Baal defend himself.

Now the Midianites and the Amalekites pitched in the valley of Jezreel, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew the wartrumpet, and called many of the tribes of Israel to help him. And he would fain know if God was pleased with what he was doing, and so he asked God for two signs. First, he would put a piece of fleece of wool off a sheep's back upon the floor, and if the wool were all wet, and the floor dry, he should believe that God was with him to help him; and the fleece was so wet that he wrung a bowlful of water out of it, while the floor was dry. Still, Gideon did not know what to do, and he asked God for another sign, and that was to be the reverse of this, for the fleece should be dry and the floor wet; "and God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew upon all the ground."

Gideon now took his army and pitched by the side of the well of Harod. And God told Gideon that he had too many soldiers, for they would be apt to be proud after the victory, and to say, "Mine own hand hath saved me;" so Gideon was to tell all that were afraid to go back to their homes, and out of thirty-two thousand, only ten thousand remained behind, twenty-two thousand being afraid. Still there were too many; so God commanded Gideon to take them to the water to drink, and some lapped or dipped up the water with their hands, and then lapped it with their tongues, while the others knelt down to drink it, and God told Gideon that those who lapped should go with him to the battle, and no more. How many do you suppose there were that God would have to fight a great army of the Midianites? Why, only three hundred! So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets, and Gideon sent all the rest away; "and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley."

The same night the Lord told Gideon that he was to beat the Midianites, but if he had still any fear, he was to take a companion, and go and visit their camp in secret. And he did so, and the enemy covered the ground, and their camels which carried their luggage were too many in number.

Now a Midianitish soldier dreamt that a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and overturned a tent. And he told it to his fellow-soldier that was near him, and he said, "This is the sword of Gideon, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all his host." Gideon was near and heard this, for God made the soldier dream, and taught the

other to explain it, and caused Gideon to hear it, that his heart might not be afraid. So Gideon worshipped God, and returned full of courage.

And now he took an odd method to fight the Midianites. He divided his three hundred men into three companies of one hundred each; "and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers, and he ordered every man to do everything that he should do."

So about midnight, when the Midianites were fast asleep, he marched quietly with his little army to the outside of their camp. And he blew his trumpet, and all the three hundred blew theirs. And then he smashed his pitcher, and all the rest smashed theirs, which they held in their left hands. And, lo, in a moment there were three hundred lights! And then they shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." No wonder that the Midianites were afraid, especially as God had resolved to destroy them, for they must have thought, at the moment, that there was a large army indeed behind, when there were no less than three hundred trumpeters, and three hundred light-bearers besides, as they probably imagined. So they thought their best way was to flee; indeed, when a man awakes out of sleep in a fright, he hardly knows what to do. "All the host ran, and cried, and fled." And every man killed his fellow, not knowing him from a foe.

And Gideon sent for the men of Ephraim to pursue after the flying army, and they did so, and they took and slew Oreb and Zeeb, two Midianitish princes.

The people of Israel were delighted with Gideon's bravery and success, and asked him to be their king, but he would not.

To keep up the remembrance of this victory, he asked them to give him the golden ear-rings which they had taken from the Midianites, and he made out of them a sacred garment, called an ephod; partly, perhaps, mixing the gold with the garment, and paying for other costly materials with the rest. This ephod, if nothing else was made out of the gold, was worth more than fifteen thousand dollars. But some think that he made a little tabernacle with it, putting in it all the furniture for worship. In doing so he did what was wrong, because God had fixed one place at his command, for the purpose of worship, and none were to fix another. The consequence was, that the people made an idol of the ephod, and foolishly worshipped it.

Gideon having died in a good old age, was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father. But no sooner was he dead than all Israel went again after the false gods of the heathen; and as for Gideon, they quite forgot him,

and cared nothing for his family of seventy sons which he had left behind him, though, through his victories, the land had enjoyed quietness forty years.

## King Abimelech.

JUDGES IX. 6.

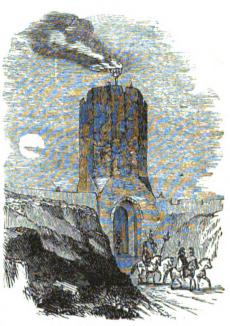
AND now Israel were all in confusion without a leader, and instead of being given up to foreign enemies, they were punished for their idolatry by being let loose against each other.

Besides his seventy sons, who were his heirs, Gideon left one by a concubine, or wife, whose son was not allowed to inherit or share any part of his property. This young man was, however, very ambitious, or desirous of being above all the rest in power. So he went to Shechem, where his mother's brethren lived, and he persuaded them to make him king. "For," said he, "if you do not choose me, you will have all Gideon's other sons for kings, and is it not better to support one than seventy? Besides, I am your relation, and they care nothing about you; if I am king, I may do you some service." So they gave him money out of their idol's temple, and he hired a set of base fellows to protect him, and he went and killed his brethren, that he might have the throne to himself; one only escaping out of the seventy, which was Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, or Gideon.

Now Jotham was a wise young man, and he went and warned the people against his wicked half-brother. And he told them a parable, to get their attention. He said that the trees met to choose a king; but the most noble trees, the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine, would not be kings, but chose to do good in a different way; but a bramble, which is a mean and scratching thing, and will tear you to pieces, had the audacity to accept of the honor, and looked very great. Here he meant that neither his father, nor the other judges before him, would be made kings, but, at last, a mean and wicked man had taken the high rank which they refused. Well, if they ever prospered with such a king, they had done well, but time would soon prove. And when he had warned them he escaped. This is the oldest fable in the world; which, under the representation of trees talking, concealed the talk of men, which all the while he meant. It is very amusing, and was very wise; for, not at first knowing his meaning, the people heard all he had to say, which had he spoken out at first, they would not have done.

Abimelech had only reigned three years over Israel when he quarrelled with the men of Shechem. So Abimelech went and fought them, and killed them all and destroyed their city, and sowed it with salt, which was a sign then used that the city should be built no more. Still the tower of

the city was not taken, so Abimelech took his men to the top of a mountain, and took an axe with him, and told them to do as he did; and he cut down a large bough from a tree and put it on his shoulder, and his men did the same. And then they went to the tower, piled the huge heap of wood round it, set it on fire and burnt all the people that remained there, which were "about a thousand men and women." Then the king went to a place called Thebez, and took that, but the people fled to a strong tower which was in their city. And the king thought to burn this as he had done the other. So he went to the door to set the wood on fire, when a woman threw a large millstone from the top, and it fell upon



TOWER OF SHECHEM.

his head and broke his skull. He had, however, sense enough left to know who did it; and, as he thought it was disgraceful to be killed by a woman, he begged his armor-bearer, or the man that carried his heavy shield, and perhaps his spear, that he would run him through, and he did so, and the king died. So God rewarded the wickedness of Abimelech in slaying his brethren, and the wickedness of the Shechemites in helping him to do so vile a deed; "and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal," as he had told them: "The Lord is known by the judgments he executeth; the wicked is snared by the work of his own hands." It is thus that wickedness is rewarded at almost every turn in the lives of men and people who set at naught the teachings and providence by which they are surrounded; and God has in no age of the world punished such as were ignorant of his laws and understood not his purposes in dealing with men.

### Jephthah's Vow.—The Ephraimites Slain.

JUDGES X., XI., XII.

AFTER Abimelech was dead there arose a new judge named Tola, and in his time, which was during twenty-three years, things went on well in Israel.

Jair, a Gileadite, followed him in office, and judged Israel twenty-two years. And he had thirty sons that helped him, and rode on asses' colts from place to place, to see that things were properly done throughout the kingdom, and that no neighbor was unjust to another.

After Jair died Israel returned again to false gods. Then God let the Philistines afflict them, and they and the Ammonites troubled them eighteen years.

And a large army of the Ammonites marched against Israel, who were greatly frightened, and they cried to the Lord. And the Lord, still gracious, heard them yet again. Then they confessed their sins, and trusting in God they gathered an army to meet their enemies. But they had no general. So the princes or chiefs of Gilead offered to make him their ruler, who would take the command of their armies.

Jephthah, the Gileadite, was a mighty man of valor; and as he was famed for his bravery, the Gileadites now thought of him, and they sent for him and asked him to be their leader. Jephthah told them how ill they had used him, but if they would promise to obey his commands, he would come and aid them.

So Jephthah sent to the king of the Ammonites to ask why he had invaded or entered with armies into his country. And the king made some excuses about some quarrels which had happened several hundred years before.

Then Jephthah accused the king of intending wickedly to shed blood, and he appealed to God to be his help.

And now the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he resolved to meet his foe. And he vowed to the Lord that if he defeated him he would, on his return, offer to him the first thing he met as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

He soon defeated the children of Ammon, and on his return was first met by his own and only daughter and child. It was often the custom for women to go out with music and dancing to meet the conqueror on his return. She went so to meet her father, and being the first object he saw, he remembered his vow, and he rent his clothes, which was the sign of great grief used among the Israelites.

"Alas, my daughter!" said he, "thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto



JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

the Lord, and cannot go back." And she, a most kind, obedient daughter, who loved her father, said unto him, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon."

Then she begged of her father to let her have two months to mourn over her early separation from the world, and that she should die without being a mother, which was a great grief to a woman of Israel; as each one hoped that the Messiah or Christ should be born in her family.

"At the end of the two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow."

Now some suppose that she was slain and offered up for a burnt-offering; but it is strange that any, and more so that many, have had such a notion.

The heathen offered human sacrifices, but God would have abhorred so brutal and unnatural a deed. Besides, Jephthah might have paid a ransom, and have rescued his daughter from death, if she had even been so vowed to the Lord. (See Lev. chap. xxvii. 4.) But she was only separated forever from the world, and made a kind of priestess to serve God all the days of her life. And every year the daughters of Israel went to condole with her on her misfortune, in being separated from the mothers of Israel.

The Ephraimites, who had before quarrelled with Gideon, now quarrelled with Jephthah. They were offended that they had not been called to share in the triumphs of Jephthah, when he went out to battle, though, when he had before asked them, they would not go. So, they abused Jephthah and the Gileadites, and called them hard names, and represented them as a set of vagabonds. From words they came to blows, and a great battle was fought. The Ephraimites were beaten and ran away, and as they had to pass some of the fords of Jordan, where the water was most shallow, in order to get home, the Gileadites went and stopped there to meet them. And, as they tried to pass, they asked them if they were Ephraimites. To save their lives, they told a lie, and said—No. But this would not do. For there was a word which means a river or stream, which the Ephraimites pronounced in a particular way: this word was Shibboleth, but they called it Sibboleth, and could not sound the h. So, you know, in our own country, people of different States sound some letters in different ways.

Well, when the Ephraimites denied who they were, "Then," said the Gileadites, "say now Shibboleth," but they said Sibboleth, for they could not frame their mouths to speak the word. So they were discovered, and were all slain. And a shocking havoc it was, for "there fell at that time, of the Ephraimites, forty and two thousand."

And Jephthah judged Israel six years, "and he died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead."

After Jephthah, Ibzan was judge for seven years.

After him, Elon for ten years.

After him, Abdon for eight years.

Next followed Samson, whose great strength and strange career have made his history interesting to many who have not cared to read other parts of the Bible. In reading of his great deeds, however, we should not forget, that he did many things which were wrong, some of them probably through ignorance of the right way.

### History of the Wonderful Deeds of Samson.

JUDGES XIII.-XVI.

THE old and sad story is here again repeated, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years."

While these evil doings were going on, God still had designs of mercy towards this guilty people. And he sent an angel to the wife of "a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah," and he told her that she should have a son, and that she must bring him up as a Nazarite; that is, set him apart for God's service, as he wanted to employ him. You remember reading about the law concerning the Nazarites in the sixth chapter of Numbers.

So Samson was born, and grew up, "and the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan."

When Samson became a young man, he went to a place called Timnath, which belonged to the Philistines, and there he saw a young woman that he chose for his wife. This was against the commands of God (see Deut. vii. 3), but in this case "it was of the Lord," to permit him to please his eye, as God overruled this event to make Samson the avenger of Israel against the Philistines.

Samson's father and mother told him that if he married a heathen woman, he would do a very wrong thing; but he would have his own way, and he felt the consequences of breaking God's commands. "Get her for me," said he, "for she pleaseth me well."

Finding it of no use to argue with him, Manoah and his wife yielded, and went to Timnath to settle the matter.

On the way to Timnath, Samson was met by a young lion that ran roaring at him. "And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done."

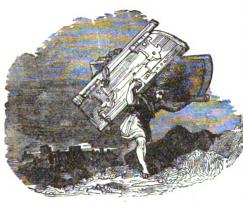
Then "he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well:" he liked her conversation as well as her person, and having settled matters, "after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and

they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion," for he meant to make a riddle from it, and that would have given them the clue.

Samson's father and mother went with Samson, and he made a feast on the occasion of his marriage, and thirty young men were invited to be at it.

Then they passed their time in making riddles, and Samson gave one which he allowed the Philistines seven days to find out; and he would then give them thirty sheets or dresses, in which the Easterns wrap themselves at night, and thirty changes of garments, to wear by day, if they could tell its meaning; but, if they could not, then they were to give him the like.

Then he told his riddle, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." So they puzzled in vain, for three days, to find out the riddle, and when they could not find it, they went to Sam-



SAMSON CARRYING OFF THE GATES OF GAZA.

son's wife and frightened her, and told her that they would burn her, and set fire to her father's house, if she did not get Samson to tell her the meaning of his riddle.

So Samson's wife "wept before him" till the seventh day came, and his heart was so touched, that at last he told her the riddle, and she told the Philistines.

Then the Philistines went to Samson on the seventh day, and gladly told him that they had

found out the riddle. "What," said they, "is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer," said Samson, "ye had not found out my riddle;" meaning, if they had not used his wife to ask him, they would have been beaten.

Samson seems to have been angry that his wife had told her countrymen his secret, and so he left her at her father's and went home. After a while, however, he thought that he would go back for her; but when he got to her father's house, he found that her father had married her to another one of his companions, and wanted him to take her younger sister instead of her.

Samson was then resolved that he would make the Philistines pay dear for their treatment; so he went, perhaps assisted by others, and caught three hundred foxes, or jackals, somewhat resembling foxes, which he might be some days in collecting, "and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst between two tails; and when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives."

The Philistines, finding that Samson had done them this mischief, and learning the reason why, then went and burnt his wife and her father, probably by setting fire to their dwelling, and so they thought that Samson would be contented as they were punished.

But Samson was not yet satisfied. The Philistines had used him very ill, and though revenge is not proper, yet, in this case, God



PHR POY

made his anger to work Israel's deliverance. So he fell upon the Philistines and "smote them hip and thigh," or heaps upon heaps, "with a great slaughter."



After this, Samson went to live in a rock, which was, perhaps, a fortress, called Etam. And the Philistines got together a great number of men, and went and pitched in Judah; and the men of Judah fearing for themselves, asked the reason of this visit. And when the Philistines told them they wanted to find Samson, the men of Judah, three thousand in number, went to the top of the rock Etam, and told Samson that they were come to deliver him to the Philistines. Was not this base of them, because Samson was one of their own countrymen, and the Philistines were all the time oppressors of Israel? Well, the cowards did not like to fall upon him, lest he should smite them, as he had smitten the Philistines, so they entreated

him to deliver himself up, and he, not wishing to hurt any of his countrymen, agreed to do so, on condition that they would not kill him when he was in their hands. "And they bound him with two new cords and brought him up from the rock."

And when Samson came to Lehi, where the Philistines were, they all

"shouted against him;" when, all in a moment, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands."

Samson had no weapon, but he found the new jaw-bone of an ass lying near him, and this he made his sword. He "put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith."

Then, as the conquerors of whom you have before read, Samson made a song of triumph, and he sung,

"With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, With the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

Samson now threw away the jaw-bone, and in remembrance of the event

he called the place Ramath-lehi, which means the lifting up of the jaw-bone.

After this battle he was thirsty and ready to die, and he prayed to the Lord to help him, and God clave a hollow place in the place now called by him a jaw-bone, and there came water thereout, and he revived. Then he called that spot after a particular name, that God's goodness to him might not be forgotten; the name he gave to it was Enhakkore, which signifies the well of him that cried, that is, that cried to God.

Some time after this Samson went to Gaza, a city of the Philistines, and he remained there for the night. But the Philistines soon learnt that he was come amongst them, and so they resolved once more to try and catch him. So "they compassed him in," by fastening all the gates of the city, and put guards to lie in wait for him in the morning, when they intended to kill him.

However, he got up at midnight, having some divine impression on his mind that warned him of his danger, and he went to the gates of the city, but found them fast. He made no difficulty on that account, but he laid hold on the posts and pulled up posts and gates and all, just as a strong man might a little garden gate, and away he carried them in triumph on

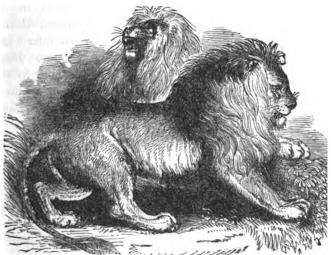


his shoulders, "bar and all," as conquerors sometimes did their spoils, and left them on the top of a hill, that many people might see them.

After this Samson chose for his companion one Delilah, a Philistine woman whom he loved, and who lived in the valley of Sorek.

The lords of the Philistines, who seem always to have been on the watch for Samson, thought this a good opportunity to take him, so they offered Delilah a sum of money equal to about thirty-five hundred dollars of our money, if she would find out where his strength was, and so rob him of it; most likely, they thought he had got some kind of charm to enable him to do such wonders as he did.

Delilah was glad enough to accept of the offer, and she teased Samson to tell her the secret. Samson vexed her in turn, by telling her first one thing and then another, as you may read in the sixteenth chapter, and when she had first bound him with seven green withes, and then again with new ropes, and then wove his locks and fastened them with a pin in the wall, as he told her at different times, he set himself free and showed that he was as strong as ever.



EASTERN LIONS.

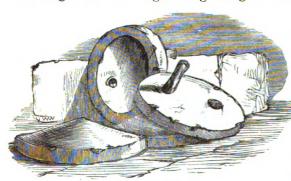
Then Delilah told him that he mocked her, and that, if he loved her, he would not serve her so. So Samson at length told her all his heart, and said that he was a Nazarite, and his head had never been shaved, but if she cut off his hair he would be as weak as any other man.

Having long hair was the mark of a Nazarite, and if this was cut off the Nazarite's vow would be broken, and God's Spirit would depart from him.

Delilah now believed, from Samson's very sincere manner, that he had told her all his heart, and she earnestly begged the lords of the Philistines to come to her and take their captive. So they came and brought the money in their hand. And she contrived to make Samson fall asleep on her knees, "and she called for a man, and caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head," in which his hair was, probably, plaited; "and she began to afflict him," or insult him, to try if his strength was quite gone. Samson now awoke, and thought he could do as before, but his locks were gone, of which he was not aware, having been asleep, and now "the Lord was departed from him."

Then the Philistines took him, put out his eyes, carried him to Gaza and bound him with fetters of brass, and made a slave of him, "and he did grind in the prison-house;" for they set their slaves to grind their corn.

At length his hair began to grow again. And about that time, "the



EASTERN MILLSTONES.

lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon, their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into

our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us."

Then, after the sacrifice, they sent for Samson to make sport for them, probably by ridiculing, and teasing and smiting him. And that he might be seen by all, they set him in a public part of the building where they were, between two pillars.

Samson then asked a lad that guided him just to help him to lay hold on the two main pillars that supported the building. "Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there: and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport," the roof being flat, and, probably, having openings in it to give a view below.

At this moment, Samson prayed to God to give him strength; then, grasping a pillar with each hand, he cried out, "Let me die with the

Philistines." "And he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein."

This was a great blow at the Philistines, for you have just read that all their lords or great men were there; on the roof only were three thousand persons, besides all that were inside, so that, probably, six or seven thousand were slain in this last effort of



SLAVES GRENDING CORN.

Samson. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

Then Samson's brethren took him and buried him in the burying-place of Manoah his father. "He judged Israel twenty years."

## The Story of Micah and his Gods.

JUDGES XVII., XVIII.

OME chapters are put at the end of the book of Judges, which contain stories of what happened a little after the days of Joshua, and long before Samson; but as they do not relate to the rulers of Israel, they are put here that they might not interrupt their history, by coming between Joshua and the Judges.

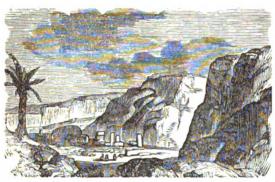
In the sixth verse we learn when the story happened which we are about to tell. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

"And there was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah."
And his mother had hoarded up eleven hundred pieces of silver, which she probably meant to leave him when she died; but he, finding where they

were, took and laid them up for his own use. When she missed the money, she was in a great passion and cursed the thief. Perhaps she suspected Micah, and did so in his hearing that she might terrify him, for it was a dreadful thing for him to hear his mother curse him. So Micah, alarmed at her words, directly told her that he had taken the money, and he restored it, and she then blessed him.

His mother then told him that she had dedicated the money to the Lordfor her son's benefit, to make a graven image and a molten image, and she restored the money for that purpose. However, he gave his mother the money, and she took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, to melt them into the shape of something to be used in worship.

And Micah, her son, had a house of gods, or idols, and he made an



MOUNT EPHRAIM.

ephod, or priest's costly garment, and teraphim, or some sort of household gods; and having himself children grown up, he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

Micah probably designed to worship the God of Israel, but as it was some trouble to go a great way to the Tabernacle, he thought he might save that, by having

a priest at home. Now as this was contrary to God's command, who would have all Israel to worship together, he committed a great fault, and not a dess in making his son to serve as a priest.

However, he soon got another priest instead of his son. A young man of Bethlehem-Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, happened to be travelling that way, and stopped at Micah's house, where we may suppose, according to the simple customs of that time and country, he sought a night's lodging and some refreshment. Micah very naturally wished to know who he was, and found that he was a Levite, who had last dwelt at Bethlehem, a city in the tribe of Judah, and that he was seeking some comfortable spot to live in; from which it appears that the nation being then without a king or governor, and so all in disorder, the Levites were not properly provided for as God had commanded by Moses.

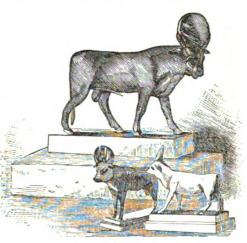
So Micah asked him to stop and live with him, and be to him as a father and a priest, and, said he, "I will give thee ten shekels of silver," about eight dollars, "by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals." In asking him to be his father, he meant that he might advise with him and respect him as a father; and as a priest, that he should perform all his rites of religion; and though the wages seem small, they were good for that country in those early times.

So the Levite was satisfied, and Micah consecrated him, or filled his hand with sacrifices to offer for him,—and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah.

This was all doing what was wrong. Micah had no power given him to

consecrate a priest, and so he did it without God's command; and though the priests were of the tribe of Levi, yet every Levite was not a priest, but only such as were of the family of Aaron. However, Micah thought himself very happy, because he had got hold of a Levite to worship in his house, and he said, "Now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

The tribe of Dan, finding themselves straitened for room, sent out five men to spy out the



ANCIENT IDOLS.

land, and see if they could discover a good spot. They, like the Levite, happened to stop at Micah's house. And they happened also to know the voice of the Levite, and asked him how he got there; and when they heard his story, they asked him to act as their priest and to inquire of God whether they should succeed in their journey. He said they would, and, as it happened, he told them right.

Well, they went on to Laish, about sixty-five or seventy miles further, and there they saw the people living very carelessly, quite at ease, and not on their guard against any attack.

So they went back and told their brethren, and six hundred armed men joined them, and they set out on their march.

In their way they had, as the five men, to pass by Micah's house, and being told about the priest and all his things for worship, they got the five men to go in and steal them; and they secured the priest, and told him it would be much more honorable for him to be priest for so many, rather than for Micah's family. So he very readily went with them, and ran away from poor Micah.

As soon as Micah found what they had done, he got his neighbors



MICAH'S IMAGES.

together; and they set off after the Danites, and overtook them. "What aileth thee?" said they; that is, "What is the matter?" "Matter," said Micah, "ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more?" But they told him he had better go back lest he should get the worst of it; and finding they were much too numerous for him, he was obliged to lose his priests and his gods.

Then the men of Dan went

and took Laish, and killed its idle inhabitants, and burnt the place, and built a city and called it Dan. And there they set up Micah's graven images, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, who had been Micah's priest, became theirs, he and his sons, until the day of the captivity of the land, and they had Micah's image with them "all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh;" which was till the time of Samuel, when the ark of God was carried away captive by the Philistines.

Thus ends the history of Micah's gods, showing how the Danites became guilty of setting up idolatry.

<sup>\*</sup> The best Biblical scholars say that this name Manasseh should be Moses, and that this Levite who was the priest of the Danites in their idolatrous worship was really a grandson of Moses, "the man of God."



## RUTH:

Is named after the woman whose history it gives. It was not written for a good while after the events it records. Samuel, the prophet, is generally believed to have written it. It not only properly follows the book of Judges, but is believed to belong to it. Its authority is shown in the fact of Ruth's name being inserted by Matthew in our Saviour's genealogy. The book has four chapters.

The History of Naomi and Ruth.

RITH L-IV.

HIS book contains a remarkably interesting story. In the days of the Judges, of whom we have lately been reading, there was a famine in the land of Israel, and "a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah," the place where Christ was afterwards born, "went to sojourn, or live for a time, in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the There the man died, and his two sons married

name of his wife Naomi." two Moabitish women, "the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth."

In about ten years the two sons died also, so Naomi was in a strange country with neither husband nor sons.

She, no doubt, longed to return home, for the people among whom she lived did not serve God, and she, who was an Israelitish woman,



VIEW ON PRONTIER OF MOAR

could not feel happy among those who were given to a false worship. 261

Having learnt that there was bread enough in her own land, she set out to see it once more; and her daughters-in-law, that is, her sons' wives, went with her.

On the way, she advised her two daughters-in-law to go back to their own country and friends; and she kissed them to bid them good-bye, and they all wept together. "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her." Then Naomi said to Ruth, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law." Then Ruth told her that she had fully made up her mind, and it was of no use to try and persuade her to turn back. "Thy people," said she, "shall be my people, and thy God my God;" "I will have no more to do with the heathen in my own country, nor will I serve any more the false gods of Moab."

So they went together to Bethlehem, "in the beginning of barley-harvest."

On Naomi's reaching Bethlehem, many did not know her; she was so



BETHLEHEM-JUDAH, THE HOME OF NAOMI.

altered by time and sorrow,—for time changes the fine bloom on the face, just as autumn does the colors of the summer flowers,—and the deaths of her husband and sons had marked her countenance with lines like those of age, for sorrow brings many down near to the grave, or sends them there.—"And they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not

Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty;"—"I went out with a husband and two sons, and something to buy bread, but now I am a widow, and childless, and poor; my name Naomi, which means beautiful, does not suit me, for my face is wrinkled with grief; call me, therefore, by another name—call me Mara, which means bitterness, for I am now a woman of a sorrouful spirit."

Well, now they had arrived at home they must have bread. So Ruth proposed to go and work in the field, and glean some corn with the poor. And Providence so ordered it that she went into a field which belonged to Boaz, a relation of Naomi's husband, and a very rich man.

And Boaz found that she was there, and having heard about her, how

good she was to her mother-in-law, and how sincerely she loved the true God, so as even to forsake everything to serve him, he ordered that nobody should disturb her, that she might eat and drink with his servants; and that she might be the better supplied, he commanded the corn even to be dropped, on purpose, by the way, for her to glean it.

Having finished gleaning, Ruth went home with her load, which



BOAS AND RUTH.

"was about an ephah of barley," or a bushel. And so she continued gleaning till the end of barley-harvest.

Now, it was a law in Israel for the nearest relation of a deceased person to marry his widow, if the husband died and left no sons and daughters. And Ruth being the widow of one of Elimelech's sons, her mother told her to make known to Boaz, who was Elimelech's relation, that he must marry her according to the law. We have no such law, and no such custom here, and therefore it would be quite improper among us to do as Ruth did, but Boaz in his day could not condemn her.

There was, however, another relation of her late husband's who was nearer to him than Boaz; and Boaz said he would see if he would marry her, and recover the property of the family; and if he would not, then he would do as the law commanded.

So the matter was settled before ten of the elders, or aged chief men of the city, and the kinsman not being inclined to take Ruth, "he drew off his shoe," which was a custom to show that all claim to any one in such a case was given up, and so she became the wife of Boaz, and made Naomi very happy.

This little history will teach us that good people, like Naomi, may be very much afflicted for a time, yet God in the end will comfort them: that God can, by his grace, bring the worst sinners to love and serve him, as he did Ruth, a Moabitish woman, one of the people of that nation whose king tried to curse Israel: and that none shall ever lose that give up anything dear to them in order to serve God, as Ruth even did all her family and friends, and became at last the wife of a rich man and a pious Israelite, who loved her. But the greatest event in the story, and the reason why it is told, is, that it contains something of consequence about Jesus Christ. For Ruth had a son, and they called his name Obed; he was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David, and Jesus Christ was called the Son of David, according to the flesh. So he could be traced back in this history as springing from Ruth—from Ruth who was once a heathen woman, and from Boaz, a pious Jew; showing us, who were then a heathen people, that he is the Saviour of the Gentiles, or heathen, as well as the Jews. Thus, by leaving her wicked people and not going back with Orpah, and resolving on living with Naomi among the true worshippers of God, Ruth had the honor of being one of the line from which should spring that glorious Saviour, in whom all nations should be blessed.



## FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL:

Is called after the eminent judge and prophet who wrote twenty-four chapters of it. The ancient Jews united the First and Second Book of Samuel in one, and gave it the name of the Book of Samuel. This seemed more proper, as the authorship of Samuel does not extend to its second book, which tells of things that transpired after his death. Two very old translations call the two books we refer to the First and Second Books of Kings. The concluding part of this book, some say, was written by the prophets Nathan and Gad, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. About eighty years is contained within the period of this book, running from the birth of Samuel to the death of King Saul. It has thirty-one chapters, and gives some deeply interesting and important narratives.

## Young Samuel, a Servant of God.—Eli's wicked Sons.

1 SAMUEL I., II., III.

whose name was Elkanah. And, as we have before seen, it was common in that country to have more wives than one, and so Elkanah had two wives, called Hannah and Peninnah. But Hannah was not a mother, and her heart was therefore grieved. Peninnah, too, was unkind to her; and instead of pitying, she vexed her and provoked her, perhaps telling her that she would never see the Messiah, or Saviour, springing from her blood.

So she prayed silently to the Lord, and vowed, that if she should ever have a son, he should be given up for the entire service of God. And while she was praying, Eli, the priest, who "sat by a post of the temple of the Lord," saw her moving her lips and looking much grieved, and he thought that she was not sober. But he did not know her heart; he therefore reproved her; but when she told him she was praying in her sorrow—pouring out her soul before the Lord—then Eli pitied her too, and prayed God to hear her prayer. And so she went away "no more sad."

After a time, she had a son to blese her family, and she called his name Samuel, which means, "asked of God."

And when she had weaned Samuel, she took him up with her to Shiloh, to serve God always in his house.

Hannah then prayed and sang a song of thanksgiving to God; and Samuel was left to "minister unto the Lord before Eli, the priest."

This priest had sons, but they were "sons of Belial;" that is, wicked men, sons of the wicked one. As their father was high priest and judge in Israel, they were priests by birth; but they were bad priests.

And now, Samuel, though young, "ministered before the Lord." Some little services, perhaps, he was employed in about the altar, though much under the age appointed by the law for the Levite's ministration. He could light a candle, or hold a dish, or run on an errand, or shut a door; and, because he did this with a pious disposition of mind, it is called, ministering to the Lord, and great notice is taken of it. After a while he did his work



LITTLE SAMUEL ON AN ERRAND OF MERCY.

so well, that Eli appointed he should minister with a *linen* ephod, as the priests did—though he was no priest—because he saw that God was with him.

And Samuel's kind "mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."

And now we learn something more about Eli's wicked

sons; there was hardly a wicked deed which they did not commit. And Eli, their father, talked with them, and tried to persuade them to turn from their wicked ways, but they did not give heed to his reproofs. So while "the child Samuel grew up and was in favor, both with the Lord and also with men," these sons were quite the contrary, neither beloved by the one nor the other.

God told Samuel what he would do to Eli's wicked family. You may read, in the third chapter, how God called to Samuel when he had "laid down to sleep," and that Samuel supposed it was Eli speaking to him, and ran to the old man to know what he wanted—and that he did so three times, till at last Eli saw that God must have said something to him in an

extraordinary way, and desired him to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and to listen to all that the voice should speak. Also, that in the

morning Eli asked Samuel to tell him all that he had heard; and when he found that it was a message of judgment on his wicked children, he could plead nothing in their behalf, for God was just in all he meant to do, and he only said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." So Samuel was known and acknowledged to be a prophet of the Lord, and his fame reached from Dan to Beersheba, the two parts of Judea most distant from each other, the one the northern, and the other the southern limit.



TEMPLE CANDELABRA.

## The History of the Ark when taken by the Philistines, and of its Restoration to Israel.

1 SAMUEL IV.-VII.

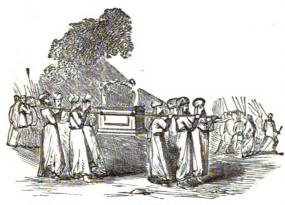
THE Israelites were at this time greatly vexed by the Philistines, who had a sort of rule over them, and they resolved to set themselves free. So they went out to meet the Philistines, and were beaten with the loss of four thousand men.

The elders of Israel then advised them to send to Shiloh, and get the ark of the covenant in the camp—as in the days of Moses and Joshua, when its presence gave success, it being then a sign of God's own presence amongst the people. And when the ark had arrived, the Israelites were so rejoiced, and felt so sure that they should beat the enemy, that they shouted till the earth seemed to ring like a bell with the sound of their voices. But God had not told them to fetch the ark, nor had he said he would be with them.

However, when the Philistines knew the ark was there, they were sadly

afraid, but instead of answering the purpose which the Israeites intended—to frighten the Philistines away—they were only provoked to fight the more desperately. "And Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen;" or, as we should now say, infantry, or foot soldiers. "And," what was worst of all, "the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas," who had brought the ark, "were slain;" so, as God had said, they died "both in one day."

As soon as the defeat had happened, a man of the tribe of Benjamin ran off to Shiloh, where Eli was anxiously waiting to hear the news, and especially if the ark of God was safe. And he told the news as he went along, and the people made a great lamentation, and Eli began to fear all



BEARING THE ARK.

was not right. Then the messenger told him that the troops were beaten—and great numbers were slain—and that his two sons were killed—and last of all, that the ark of God was taken. He heard all with silent grief, but when he heard that the ark was taken, his heart sank within him, and he fell down off his seat and broke his neck, and died.

Eli was ninety-eight years old, and had judged Israel forty years.

So died Eli's sons for their wickedness, and so died Eli, because he had not been earnest enough in rebuking his wicked children.

Nor have we yet heard the whole of this sorrowful tale, for the wife of Phinehas was ill at the time, and on hearing of his death and of the taking of the ark, she died also, leaving a son, whom in memory of these painful events she called Ichabod, which means *The glory is departed*, for "she said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken."

The Philistines now foolishly thought that they had got the God of the Israelites, and they carried the ark in triumph to Ashdod, one of their five cities, and there they put it in the temple of their idol Dagon, either to worship it themselves, or rather as a trophy of victory. The next morning

they found that Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark, and they set their idol up again. And the next morning after that, they found that he had fallen again, and was so broken that only his stump remained.

This idol of the Philistines was made like one of our fanciful pictures called a mermaid; the upper part being a human shape to the middle, and the lower like a fish: as Horace, a Roman poet, describes it, "a handsome woman with a fish's tail."

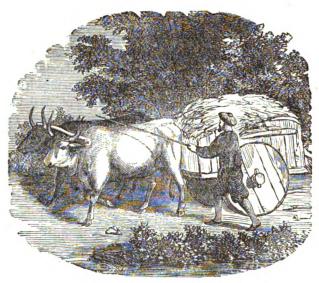
The Philistines would now have done wisely to return the ark, or worship the God of Israel, whose presence was often with it, or who chose to show his power where it was; but they were blind idolaters, and they were punished for hurting Israel, though Israel deserved punishment from God. Having therefore done that work, they are now punished for their own crimes in slaying the favored nation, and God sent a disease among them, and destroyed great numbers. Then they sent the ark away to Gath, another of their cities, supposing, perhaps, they should be more lucky there, but there the people died in the same way; and last of all, they sent it to Ekron; but the people were greatly afraid of it, and they had reason to be so, for there they were smitten like the others, and their cry "went up to heaven;" that is, it was very loud and piteous, and, as we say, rent the air.

After this the Philistines kept the ark no more in their cities, but sent it into the fields, and there God punished them, for there is no escaping from his judgments when he visits the wicked. He caused mice to spring up in great multitudes, and destroy their corn.

So at the end of seven months the Philistines asked their priests and conjurers what they should do with the ark. And they advised that it should be sent away. And as they knew that the God of Israel accepted of trespass-offerings from his people, they thought that one should now be given to him-though they mistook its nature, for without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin; the death of the creatures slain, showing the death of Christ, who was to come and atone for sin. They resolved that this trespass-offering should be in a shape which should acknowledge God's hand in their sufferings, and as they had been smitten with a disease called emerods, they would have five golden emerods made like the shape of the tumor caused by the disease, and five would be one for each of their cities; and then as God had sent what was clearly a miraculous number of mice to plague them, they would send of these as many golden ones as they had cities and villages. Then they would take two milch-kine, or cows that gave milk, and tie the kine to a new cart, and bring the calves home

from them; and putting the ark in the cart, with the golden mice and emerods in a coffer or chest by its side, they would let the kine go their way without a driver.

New in doing this they thought wisely. For they reasoned that if the cows did not go home to their calves, as they are always exceedingly ford

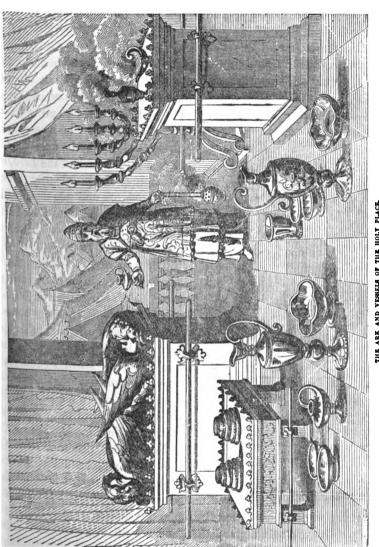


MILCH-KINE IN AN ORIENTAL CART.

of them—why then they should be sure that something wonderful was about the ark, and that God did all that they suffered; but, if they did go home, then it was all mere chance—though this last idea was very foolish, because they had seen enough to convince any but the most obstinate that there was no mere chance in what had come upon them.

Well, though the cows had never been trained for the yoke—and had no driver—and were left to go their own way—and had lost their calves, and went on lowing for them—instead of turning where they were gone, they took the straight way to Beth-shemesh, the next city in the land of Israel, and though it was eight or ten miles off, they never stopped, and the lords of the Philistines, who watched their motions, saw them cross the border of Beth-shemesh: "And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-





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shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord;" for having carried the sacred ark, they could no more be used for common purposes.

The Philistines saw all this done, and returned.

And now a dreadful punishment befell the men of Beth-shemesh. They id not treat the ark with that reverence which God ordered it to have, as



the sign that he was among the people, and he visited them with severe punishment; for "he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men." Well might the men of Beth-shemesh say, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

The men of Beth-shemesh left the ark on a stone in an open field; and the men of Kirjath-jearim fetched it away, and took it to the house of Abinadab, and sanctified or set apart Eleazar his son to keep it, so that it might not be seized by the Philistines, nor looked into again by curious Israelites. Here the ark remained till it was fetched away many years afterwards by king David.

No wonder that the ark of God was taken away, and that it was not

restored for the use of the people at Shiloh. For with that foolish inclination to idolatry which the wicked nations had around, they had now among them worshippers of idols called Baalim and Ashtaroth. And Samuel told them to put away these idols, and then, and not till then, would God deliver them from the Philistines. So they put them away, and met Samuel at a place called Mizpeh, to worship the Lord.

As soon as the Philistines heard of this, they gathered their troops together, and marched against Israel, and Israel were afraid, and entreated Samuel to pray for them. And Samuel offered a lamb for a burnt-offering, —here was a reference, my dear reader, to the only Lamb that could take away sin, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, whom it shadowed forth; and on account of this sacrifice the Lord heard Samuel.

And now, even while the sacrifice was offering up, the Philistines approached, but just as they probably thought they should slay all their victims, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder,"—and they fled in affright, and were smitten before Israel. Josephus, a Jewish writer, says, that the earth quaked under them, when first they made their onset, and in many places opened and swallowed them up; and that besides the terror of the thunder, their faces and hands were burnt with lightning, which obliged them to shift for themselves by flight.

To keep up the remembrance of this wonderful deliverance, in which God had so plainly fought for Israel, "Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, "which means the stone of help," saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

This victory kept the Philistines out of the coast of Israel all the days of Samuel, and the cities which had been taken from Israel were now restored to them.

### Saul chosen to be the First King of Israel.

#### 1 SAMUEL VIII.-X.

SAMUEL had two sons whom he made judges, because he began to grow old and unfit for all the cares of his office. But these sons, like those of Eli, turned out bad; they "turned aside after filthy lucre," that is, gain,—they took bribes, and perverted judgment, giving their opinions, in cases of dispute, in favor of those who would pay them best, and not according to right. It was not Samuel's fault, as it was Eli's, that he did not properly notice their conduct, for he was ready to hear any public complaint against them.

However, the people made the conduct of Samuel's sons an excuse to ask for a king, which they had never had. God designed that they should have one after his own heart, when Samuel should die, but they would not wait till then, and must have one instantly, and so be like the heathen nations around them.

This behavior displeased Samuel, and he prayed to God for wisdom to direct him what to do. And God told Samuel that they should have a

king, but they should feel for their rash choice. Till this time he had been their king, and had appointed them governors who had made them pay no



SAUL THE KING.

tribute, nor had vexed them by any tyranny; but now, as they had rejected him by rejecting his servant Samuel, and wanted a king, "like all the nations," they should know what sort of kings theirs were. Not such as govern the people of England, who are a free people, but such as still govern in the Eastern parts of the world, who keep all their subjects under them as so many slaves; what we call absolute monarchs, governed by no law or parliament gathered from the people, but doing everything according to their own pleasure.

Samuel told the people all this,

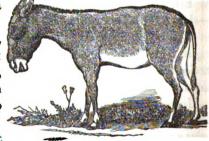
but they would not mind what he said, and so God said to him. "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

Now there was a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who was rich and mighty, and he had a son, who was a very handsome young man, and so tall that he was a head and shoulders above the height of men in general. The ancient nations usually chose such men for kings; and this man was suited

to the taste of Israel, who seemed more disposed to look for a great man than a good man, to rule over them.

Saul's father, whose name was Kish, being "a mighty man of power," had, it appears, some of the asses of the East, so beautiful and valuable, and which formed a portion of the wealth of Job and other rich men.

By some means these creatures went astray, "And Kish said to Saul, his son,



ASS OF PALESTINE.

Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses." It was quite agreeable to the simplicity of those times for persons of equal or greater substance to be employed in such an affair; asses were ridden

upon by persons of quality, and were fed and taken care of by the sons of dukes and princes.

Though Saul was now a man, and had children grown up, yet he obeyed his father's orders; and so he set an example worthy of imitation, for parents are always to be respected.

He travelled through various places, which, it is supposed, took about three days' journey; but he could hear no news of the asses.

Not being able to find them in this time, he determined to return with the servant to his father, thinking of his father's tender concern for him; supposing "that if they stayed out any longer, the old gentleman would begin to fear, as Jacob concerning Joseph, that an evil beast had devoured them, or some other mischief had befallen them."

Saul's servant, however, recollected that they were now near Ramah, the place where Samuel lived, and so he proposed to go and see this "man of God," and as he was a prophet, perhaps he would be able to tell where the beasts were to be found.

But according to long-established custom, which still continues in the East, great persons were not to be approached by strangers without a present; and as all their provision was gone, what could they present? However, the servant recollected that he had in his pocket a piece or money, "the fourth part of a shekel of silver," which was worth about ninepence of our money; and this, though trifling and hardly worth acceptance, was enough to show respect: so it was agreed that he should make Samuel a present of this piece of money.

And as they went up the hill to the city, they met with some young women going to draw water, and asked them if the *Scer* was there—for that was the name by which Samuel was known—Seer meaning nearly the same as prophet, a person who sees or foretells things to come.

Now, Samuel was just then going to sacrifice at Ramah, for the ark not being at Shiloh, divine worship was not now confined to that place. And as they hastened up the hill they met him.

God had impressed on the Seer's mind that he would on that day send a man to him whom he should anoint on the head with oil—or pour oil on it according to the ancient custom of appointing kings—and that he should rule over Israel, whose cry of distress, notwithstanding all their ill conduct, he had graciously heard, being oppressed by the Philistines; and this king should deliver them. As soon, therefore, as he saw Saul, he knew that he was the man; and God again impressed it on his mind.

Saul, not knowing Samuel, went up to him, and asked him to direct hi to the Seer's house.

Then Samuel told him that he was the Seer, that he was just going feast at the sacrifice, that he must go up with him and partake of it, and



WOMEN GOING TO DRAW WATER.

should return on the morrow; that he need not trouble himself furth about the asses, for they were found, and that he should be ruler ov Israel.

Samuel's knowledge of his business showed that he was a prophet, be his telling him that he was to be king of Israel rather surprised him, as he spoke humbly about his being raised to so great an honor.

There were about thirty persons at the feast, and Samuel put Saul "i the chiefest place," and gave him the best dish, already doing him honor; the king appointed by God to rule over Israel.

After the feast Samuel took Saul to the top of his house, which bein

**t** biz

ing a nd le flat on the roof, was convenient for walking and taking the air, as we would in our gardens; here he communed or talked privately with him, and told him, no doubt, how God had chosen him to be king; that he himself was quite willing to resign the authority of chief to him, and how he ought to perform his office for the good of the people.

The next morning, as Saul was leaving Ramah, Samuel went with him, and when they had reached the end of the city, he told him to send his servant on before, as he had particular business with him.

Then Samuel anointed him, and kissed him, according to the custom of the East.

Before parting with him, Samuel also gave him some signs of what should happen to him as he went on, which must further confirm his faith in him as a true prophet of God. First, he should meet with some who should tell him that the asses were found, and that his father was in trouble at his long absence. Then he should meet with others going to Bethel, where there was a place for the worship of God, to which they would be taking their sacrifices; they should have kids, loaves, and a bottle of wine, designed for sacrifice, meat-offerings, and drink-offerings,—and he and the servant need not fear them, for they would find them to be friends, and they would show their friendship by bidding them good speed, and also giving them two loaves, which they would need in the remaining part of their journey: afterwards they were to come to a high hill, where there was a company or garrison of Philistines, who probably kept the poor Israelites there in subjection to them. There was a school of the prophets, where men were engaged in learning the law of God, and Saul would find himself strongly moved in his mind to join them, as they should meet them coming down from the high place: they would probably have been sacrificing, and they should meet them returning with music, and prophesying or praising God; praising God being one sort of prophesying.

After this Saul was to go to Gilgal, and to wait for Samuel to join him in offering sacrifices to God.

Well, "all these signs came to pass." And when all that knew Saul before, saw him among the company of prophets, they asked each other in wonder, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

And Samuel called the people together at Mizpeh, and told them of what great things God had done for them, from time to time, ever since he delivered them out of Egypt; and how ungrateful it was in them to want a king to rule over them; and then the king was chosen by lot. By the





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first lot, the tribe of Benjamin was singled out from all the tribes; then the family of Matri, of that tribe to which Saul belonged; and then Saul, the son of Kish. And he had modestly hid himself among the stuff, supposed to be the carts and baggage, brought by the people to Mizpeh, and when he was fetched, "he was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upwards;" or, as we said before, by his head and shoulders. And when Samuel showed him to the people, they were quite delighted with him; and they all shouted, "God save the king!"

Then Samuel told the people "the manner of the kingdom;" that it was the office of the king to rule justly, and of the people to obey his lawful commands. These things were written in a book, as a kind of agreement between them, which was carefully laid up among the records of the kingdom.

Thus you have the beginning of the Kings of Israel, whose history we shall now for some time have to read.

# Saul's Victory over the Ammonites.

### 1 SAMUEL XI.

AUL began his reign by a very brave action. Nahash, who was probably a king of the Ammonites, went and encamped, or sat himself down with his army in tents, round Jabesh-Gilead, a fortified place belonging to the Israelites, near the country of the Ammonites.

So as he was very strong, and the garrison were very weak,—and still weaker in faith, or they would have trusted in God, and tried their force against the enemy,—it was proposed to Nahash that they would surrender and be his slaves, if he would tell them on what terms he would spare their lives.

Nahash told them that they must all have their right eyes thrust out.

The men of Jabesh then asked for seven days to settle the matter, and promised that if, at the end of that time, they could get no help they would surrender.

When the news reached Gibeah, where Saul was, the people, after the Eastern manner, lifted up their voices and wept so loudly, that when Saul, who after the simple manner of living in those days, came—not from a palace, but from the fields where he had been attending to the herds—he was attracted by their distress, and asked what was the matter. When he was told what Nahash intended to do, the Spirit of God came upon him, and gave him courage and wisdom. "And he took a yoke of oxen and hewed

them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and



VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES.

after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen: and the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent."

Saul soon collected an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, and the messengers went back to Jabesh-Gilcad to tell the garrison that by the time the sun was hot,—or about the noon of the morrow, they should have help; and they were glad enough at the news.

Early on the morning of that day in which the Ammonites expected to enjoy their cruel triumph over the people of Jabesh-

Gilead, Saul came suddenly upon them with his great army, which he divided into three parts, so that it fell upon the foe in three places at once, and being taken by surprise, they ran away in all directions, and Saul chased them till the heat of the day.

Pleased with Saul's bravery and success, the people now said, "Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death." Saul very generously forgave those that had insulted him, and said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

And sacrifices were offered to the Lord, and the day was spent in rejoicing.



MOR USED IN TIME OF SAUL

## Samuel's Farewell Address to Israel.

#### 1 SAMUEL XII.

SAMUEL now grew old; and, as the people had got the king whom they had chosen, he gave up the power he had held for their good.

In taking his farewell, as the ruler of Israel, Samuel reminded them of God's goodness to them and their fathers—of the miseries their fathers had suffered, when they forsook God—of their repentance—of God's gracious regard to them, and his glorious deliverances of them from their enemies, and then, of his even condescending to give them a king, when they so much wished for one. And now, he would also tell them, that under this new government they were still not to think themselves free from the government of God, whom, if they obeyed, they should be happy; but if they disobeyed, they must be miserable.

Then, to show that what Samuel spoke was true, and by his direction, God, at Samuel's word, sent "thunder and rain," at a time of the year when, in that country, the like was never known. It was the time of "wheat harvest," which is there about the end of May or beginning of June; and one who lived there for several years says that at that time he never saw any rain in Judea. So "all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel."

# Saul rejected from being King.

## 1 SAMUEL XIII.

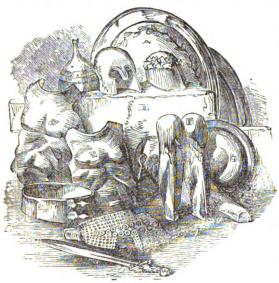
66 AUL reigned one year," and when he entered upon the second year of his reign, he did very foolishly.

He raised an army, much too small to contend with the Philistines, and then his son Jonathan smote a garrison of them that was in Geba; and it is thought that this was done treacherously, while all the parties were in a state of peace, and resting on each other's word; for something of the kind is meant by its being said that "all Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines." The Philistines vowed vengeance against them for such unfair dealing, and abominated them on account of it.

And now "the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude."

The Israelites now found that though they had a king, like the heathen, yet he could not give them courage, for never were their hearts so faint. "For the people were distressed; then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits." Some, also, went a great way off, over Jordan, and all those that stayed with Saul "followed him trembling."

Now Samuel had told Saul to go to Gilgal and wait there for him seven days, and he would come and meet him and offer sacrifices for him and the people. So Saul went to Gilgal, and waited till the seventh day; but not having patience to wait till the end of the day, as Samuel had not come—



PHILISTINE ARMO!

he thought that he would not be there at all, and so he called for the sacrifices, and offered them himself. Now this was very wicked, for he was only a king, and neither a priest nor a prophet: so that, in offering sacrifices, he had profaned the most sacred things, and dared to take upon himself the most solemn office without God's command.

Presently came Samuel, according to his promise; and Saul told him that he had waited so long that

he began to think he would not come, and he was afraid that the Philistines would fall upon him before the sacrifices were offered up; and so, much against his will, he had turned priest himself. Then Samuel told him how foolishly he had done, and that, for this act of disobedience to God, against which he had had sufficient warning, he should lose his kingdom, and it should go to another man—one after God's own heart, who would not so profane his holy things.

Saul now mustered his army, and found he had no more than six hundred men left with him. A fine army, indeed, for a king! so low was the pride of Israel now brought!

The few Israelites that followed Saul were also without swords or spears; for, when the Philistines had before beaten them, they had taken away all their forges to make iron, and their workers in that metal, so that no swords, spears, or arrow-heads could be made; and the Israelites even went down to the Philistines to sharpen their ploughshares and other instruments which they used to till the field. "So it came to pass, in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found;" they only had swords.

# Jonathan's bold Attack of the Philistines.

1 SAMUEL XIV.

JONATHAN, Saul's son, was a very brave young man; and God put it into his heart to fall upon the Philistines, having no other helper than his armor-bearer, or the man that carried his spear and shield.

When the Philistines saw Jonathan, they probably laughed at him, and they said, "Come up to us and we will show you a thing." Perhaps they thought that Jonathan would not dare to venture, and so they mocked him. Now these words were the sign which Jonathan had looked for; and by speaking so the Philistines showed that they did not care for the Israelites, and seemed to make sure of beating them. Jonathan boldly accepted of the challenge, and climbed up the steep rock on which



STEEP ROCK WITH FORT.

the fort was built, where the Philistine garrison was, followed by his armorbearer. When they saw him followed by another, they might fancy, at the moment, that they were taken by surprise by the whole army. God, too, who had prompted Jonathan to what he did, and gave him and his armorbearer courage, made the Philistines become cowards, for "they fell before

Jonathan," who, most likely, knocked them down, "and his armor-bearer slew after him." So Jonathan and his armor-bearer slew about twenty men in a small space of ground which a couple of oxen might plough over in a day.

The news of the destruction of this little garrison was immediately carried to the army; and God so ordered it that they and all the people became cowards, too, and were what we call, in such a case, panic-struck.

Some of Saul's men were on the look-out, to see that the Philistines did not surprise him; and they saw a great movement among their armies, "and behold, the multitude melted away," grew less and less, like snow melted by the sun, "and they went on beating one another." The fright of the Philistines had gone from the garrison to the camp; the men had run away, and either in clearing a way to escape, or—by mistake, likely to be made in a fright—taking their own troops for Israelites, who, they might suppose, had got in in disguise amongst them, they drew their swords upon each other and so made terrible havoe in their armies.

Saul, seeing this, wondered which of his regiments had gone out to battle, and called a muster to examine them, when no men were missing but Jonathan and his armor-bearer.

Saul was now about to consult the priest what he was to do, but the confusion among the Philistines having increased, he thought there was no time to lose, and so he and all his men went to the battle: and all those who had hid themselves now took courage and came to the battle. "So the Lord saved Israel that day."

# The Amalekites Destroyed.

## 1 SAMUEL XV.

In this chapter we learn that God sent Samuel to Saul with a command to go and destroy the people of Amalek, and to spare nothing that belonged to them; even little infants and sucklings, and every kind of beast.

This sentence was very severe, but God never punishes without a cause, and Samuel gave the reason for it: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt."

We have the particular account of what the Amalekites did in the

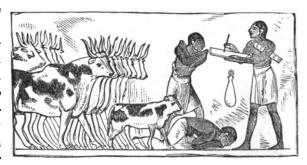
twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the seventeenth and eighteenth verses.

Saul did not, however, slay the Kenites who dwelt among the people of Amalek, for they had not partaken of their sins; Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was one of the Kenites.

And now, as God's executioner, "Saul smote the Amalekites," but he did not do all his work as God had commanded, for he spared Agag, perhaps because he was a great man: and he thought it a pity that all the fine cattle should be slain, and so he killed only the worst and kept the best.

Now, it is very wicked to do just as much of God's commands as we

please, and leave the rest undone. So did Saul, and God was displeased with him. And God said, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king," meaning, that he would now act as men did when they repent and alter what they purposed.



THE CATTLE PRESERVED BY THE KING

So Samuel went to Saul and asked how he came to keep the sheep and oxen. And Saul, to excuse himself, said that "the people spared" them, and that they were only preserved to offer to God. These were poor excuses, which Samuel knew were not true; so Samuel said, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

On learning God's displeasure, Saul began to confess that he had done wrongly, and he tried to get Samuel, as God's prophet, to speak pardon to him, but he could not. "And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent." This, Samuel as a prophet said, was a sign of what God would certainly do. "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou."

Samuel then did what Saul had left undone, and he passed sentence of death on Agag. "And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."

Thus the Amalekites were destroyed as a nation, though some are afterwards mentioned, who probably escaped from the sword of Saul and fled out of the kingdom.

# David anointed to be King of Israel.

## 1 SAMUEL XVI.

SAMUEL had retired to live quietly at Ramah, but God now commanded him to take a horn of oil and go to Jesse the Bethlehemite and anoint one of his sons to be king.



DAVID, THE KING.

As soon as Samuel had arrived at Bethlehem, the people feared, lest perhaps, as God's prophet, he might have some sentence to denounce against them for some sins which they had done, and they asked him if he came peaceably, and he told them that he came to sacrifice to the Lord. "And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice."

The first son that made his appearance was called Eliab, and he was handsome and tall, and Samuel thought that he must certainly be the one whom God had chosen to be king, for people then usually preferred a fine tall man for this rank. However, God told Samuel that he did not look at the outward appearance, but at the heart, and that Eliab was not the man whom he had chosen. Then seven of Jesse's sons passed by Samuel, one after another, and there were no

more remaining. At last Samuel asked Jesse if he had no other son; and he told him there was another, but he was the youngest, and he was then keeping some sheep. So Samuel desired that he should be fetched. "Now he was ruddy," or fresh-colored, "and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he."

Then Samuel anointed David, and returned to Ramah.

From that time "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." God permitted him to grow "fretful

and peevish, and discontented, timorous and suspicious, starting and trembling." This made him unfit for business, and a burden to himself and to all around him.

His counsellors, seeing his pitiable state, sought to relieve him, and knowing his mind to be distressed they advised the king to have a good harp-player, and whenever he felt his low fits coming upon him, as soon as he touched the music the evil spirit would depart and he would be cheerful as others.

The king liked the proposal, and ordered such a musician to be found.

Now David, the son of Jesse, whom Samuel had anointed, was very skilful in playing the harp, and one of Saul's counsellors told him of it; and though he was little of stature, he was a brave man, and this Saul would also like.

So Saul, hearing a good character of him, sent for him. And Jesse sent a few presents with him, in token of respect to king Saul. "And David came to Saul and stood before him, and he loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer." And he asked David's father to let him stay in his service. And whenever Saul's evil spirit troubled him, David played his harp; "so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

## David's Victory over Goliath.

## 1 SAMUEL XVII.

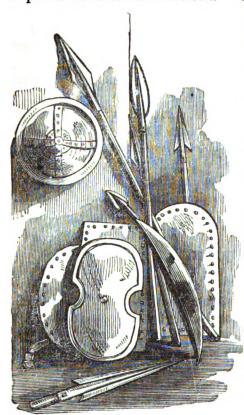
THE Israelites and the Philistines were constantly at war, and here we find them opposed to each other, having drawn up their armies on two hills with a valley between; so that they were near enough to call to each other, though they must go down into the valley, or both stand on one or other of the hills to meet in battle.

The Philistines were full of courage, for they had a terrible giant amongst them, Goliath of Gath. He was the champion of his people,—that is, one ready to defy any man who dared to meet him in battle, and whom he could crush with as much ease as any man could crush an infant. Some suppose that he was twelve feet high, but others think it more probable that he was about ten feet.

He was not only very tall, but also very strong and well armed. He had a large brass helmet on his head, and was dressed in a coat of mail, which was like a jacket or shirt of brass, fastened together in small pieces, like the

scales on a fish or the tiles on the roof of a house. Some of this sort of armor is to be seen in the tower of London.

He had also greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. These greaves were a kind of brass boots, which, however, only covered the front of the leg from the knee to the instep, so that the whole shin was protected by them; the target was something of a covering to protect his neck and shoulders. "The staff of his spear was like a



PHILISTINE SHIELDS AND SPEARS.

weaver's beam," so that he could easily play, as with a sword, with a huge piece of wood which another man could scarcely lift. "And his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron," which is thought to be above eighteen pounds. The whole armor which this giant carried about him with ease must have weighed about two hundred and seventy-two pounds, which was almost four times as much as that of the best-armed soldiers of ancient times. He had, as others, an armor-bearer to carry his shield.

This daring and terrible man came forward from the Philistine army, and called to the Israelites to tell them, that if they could send a man to beat him, the Philistines should be their servants; but if not, they should serve the Philistines.

Saul and Jonathan, and no

doubt many others, were brave men among the Israelites, but "they were greatly afraid," on account of this giant.

For forty days did Goliath thus tease and frighten the armies of Israel.

Now three of David's elder brothers happened to be in the army, and their father Jesse desired David to leave the care of the sheep, and to go and take them some food, and inquire if they were in want of anything. And just as he got to the army, the people were shouting, and were about to begin the fight. And David ran into the army to give his brothers refreshment before the battle began. Just at that moment, Goliath appeared again, and challenged the Israelites as before. "And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid."

Saul had offered to give any man great riches, and he should marry his daughter, and his father's house should also have great honors, if he would dare to fight and beat this dreadful giant.

So David asked the people what any man would have who overthrew him.

And his brother Eliab, who looked down upon him with contempt because he was younger and shorter than he, rebuked him for asking the question. But David still continued to ask it, that it might reach the ears of Saul, and he patiently bore the most ill-natured words from his brother.

At last Saul sent for David, and David told him he would go and fight the Philistine. But Saul said he was only a youth, while Goliath had long been a man of war; how, then, could he hope to beat him?

Then David cold him that he had more courage and strength than he supposed, for he had once fought and killed a lion and a bear, that came to steal some of his father's flock, and, said he, "thy servant slew both the lion



and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." And then he told him why he was so bold, because he trusted in God to help him: "the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

Saul could not any longer object. He saw that God was with David to help him, and he said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

So Saul put his own armor upon David; but when it was on him, David said it must be taken off, for he had not proved, or was not used to such a sort of armor, and therefore it would only be a hindrance to him.

Then "he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones

out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip, and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine."

Now David was very active, and he was clever in throwing a stone from a sling, and God gave him more than common strength and skill on this occasion.

The Philistine marched forward in a very stately manner, and his armorbearer was before him bearing his shield. And when he saw David, he disdained him, and seeing the staff in his hand, he asked him if he thought that he was no better than a dog, that he should dare to come out to fight him with nothing but a stick; and he was so enraged that he cursed David by his gods. And then he said to him in angry ridicule, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." This was indeed a frightful threat, uttered perhaps with a hoarse and strong voice like the growl of a lion; but David did not fear the boaster, and he replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

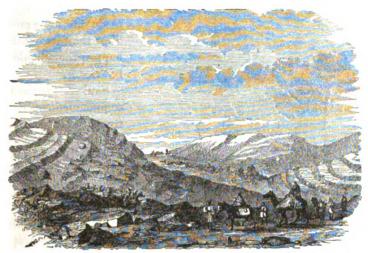
See how different was the language of David to that of the Philistine. Goliath talked of what he himself would do; but David said, "The Lord will deliver thee into my hand," and he did not trust in God in vain.

And now the combat began; "the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David." And David ran to meet this huge man, moving like a mountain and cased in brass. We may suppose that Goliath reckoned that in a few moments he should cut off the head of this rash youth, and laugh at the folly of the Israelites in sending forth such a champion; while the Israelites quaked, lest the fair form of such a courageous youth should fall beneath the sword of this tyrant.

But they had not long to think. "David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth." He was covered with brass in every other part but his face, and at this David took sure aim, and had he failed the first time, he had still four

stones left. Some think that he had a covering over his forehead called the visor of the helmet, and that he had put it up, or David's stone would not have killed him; but we are told in ancient writings that good slingers would even break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armor, so that, even then, the stone might have passed through the armor into the forehead.

"So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone,



VALLEY OF ELAH, IN WHICH DAVID AND GOLIATH MET.

and smote the Philistine and slew him." Then, having no sword of his own, David took that of the Philistine, and cut off his head.

And now, the Philistines having lost their champion, were in a terrible state of alarm. They were not willing to throw down their arms and be the slaves of Israel, as had been proposed by Goliath; and so the Israelites fell upon them as they fled, and pursued them to the very gates of their own cities.

David now took the head of Goliath with him to Jerusalem, and Saul saw him, and though he had played before him when he was melancholy, owing to his state of mind at that time he did not remember him, and inquired whose son he was; and he learnt that this hero was a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who doubtless was well known as a leading and influential man in his own town; one not without some degree of reputation, and even, perhaps, honor, among the chief men who lived at Jerusalem and elsewhere in the kingdom.

# Jonathan's love of David, and Saul's hatred of him, and attempts to take his Life.

## 1 SAMUEL XVIII.-XX.

DAVID was now entirely taken into Saul's court, and Jonathan, Saul's son, seeing him to be so brave and good, loved him very much, and



made an agreement with him, that let what would happen they should always be friends.

Saul also made David a commander over all his troops, and on every expedition on which he sent him, he showed himself so brave and wise that everybody respected him.

Saul now went everywhere about his kingdom, to meet his people in triumph, because the Philistines—the great enemies of Israel—were so completely beaten. And the women, as was usual on such occasions, "came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David

his ten thousands;" this was probably the chorus of their song of victory. It was rather vexing to Saul to hear David so exalted above himself, and

perhaps it was not quite wise in the women to praise the general above the king, especially as Saul's haughty spirit must have been known; however, it was a fact, that Saul had only fought with portions of the Philistines, while, when David beat them, their whole army was drawn out.

From that day, Saul eyed David with much jealousy, and his evil spirit returned; and while David was kindly trying to sooth him by playing his music, Saul artfully pretended to prophesy or to pray, so that David could' expect no ill design. At the same time, Saul held a javelin or dart in his hand, and cast it at David, intending to thrust him through, even so as to fasten him to the wall.

Saul was now afraid of David, and perhaps thought that he would grow too strong for him, by growing in favor with the people; so to get rid of him, and in hopes that he might be slain, he gave him a command, and sent him out to the wars. But he behaved so well, that he still increased in favor with Israel.

Saul, as you have been told, had promised the man who should meet Goliath, that he should marry his daughter as a mark of great honor; however, he broke his word, and gave his eldest daughter to another when she ought to have been David's wife.

But the king had another daughter called Michal, and she was very fond of David. And Saul said he would give her to him, if, within a certain time, he would kill a hundred more Philistines. So David killed the Philistines in the time required of him, and married Saul's daughter.

Saul was no better pleased on this account, for he had now made David a greater man than he was before; but he was vexed that his plans to destroy David had not succeeded, and he became David's enemy continually.

Then "Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David;" but Jonathan, like a true friend, told David, and advised him to get out of his way till he had tried to plead in his behalf.

Then Jonathan spoke to his father. And Saul was persuaded by Jonathan, and declared that he would think no more of doing him harm. So after this promise David was permitted to go into Saul's presence asbefore.

Soon after this, there was war again, and David triumphed gloriously over the Philistines, so that Saul was again jealous of him; and his evil spirit returned, and David, as before, played his harp to amuse him; and again he flung his javelin furiously at him, so that it stuck in the wall, but God preserved David, and he slipped away without receiving any harm.

Saul now resolved that David should escape no more, and so he sent messengers to lie in wait for him at his own house. Michal, his wife, saw what was going on, and she advised David to escape, and as they guarded the doors, she "let David down through a window; and he went and fled and escaped."

"And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, he is sick." She meant the image to appear in the bed like a sick person lying there, so that if the officers came, they either would not touch a sick man, or perhaps, if they even stabbed the place, they might go away and suppose they had killed David, and so seek no more after him. At all events, by framing this excuse, she gained time for him to escape, and get too far off for his foes to pursue him. But it was very wrong in her to tell a lie; for this she certainly did, and there was not even an excuse for it, for David was already out of harm's way.

Saul was now so resolved to kill David that if he were sick he could not wait for him to die, but desired that he might be taken to his sick bed to kill him.

The next time the messengers went, they looked more closely into the bed, to see how David was; and then they found that Michal had cheated them, and that nothing was there but an image. And Saul, on learning this, was exceedingly angry with his daughter, who would have been a very wicked woman indeed, had she delivered up her innocent husband to be slain.

In the meantime David escaped in safety to Samuel, at Ramah; "and be and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth."

When Saul found out where he was, he again sent messengers to take him; and they found Samuel's scholars, in his school of young prophets, prophesying, or praising God, and, probably, David with them; for it was a work in which his heart delighted. And "the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied," or praised God. These not returning, Saul sent again, and it happened the same with them. Then he sent a third time, and it still happened the same. So at last he resolved to go himself, and now God touched his heart, and he too caught the spirit of praise, and began to prophesy with the others, to the wonder of all, so that they said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" And this question is now turned into a kind of proverb, or common saying, so that when

wicked man puts on the pretence of religion, we ask the question, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

While Saul was at Naioth, David escaped to Jonathan, whom he still found a faithful friend.

# David eats the Shew-bread.—Feigns himself mad at Gath.

1 SAMUEL XXI.

AS Jonathan had no power to protect David against Saul his father, David took to flight, and went to Nob to visit Ahimelech the priest, who "inquired of the Lord for him." As he was very hungry, he also gave him some of the shew-bread which belonged to the priests, and which

had been set a proper time before the Lord in the sacred place, to be replaced by hot bread, which would likewise remain a proper time and then be removed for the priests in the same way.

Ahimelech also let David take away with him Goliath's sword, which, according to the custom of those times, being a valuable trophy or proof of victory, was laid up in the sacred place.

David next fled into the country of the Philistines, where

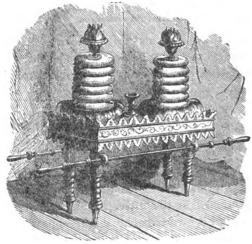
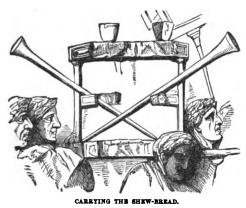


TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

he hoped no one would find him out, for he might reckon that it would hardly be supposed by Saul that he would go to the people whose champion he had slain, nor would they be likely to suspect that he had been so daring as to venture among them. Yet it is thought by some that Achish the king of Gath, where Goliath lived, knew who David was, and received him, either admiring his bravery as a soldier, or being pleased that he had killed Goliath, who, as he was a very terrible person, might have even kept his own king in fear of him.

However, at all events, the servants of Achish spied David out, and asked

whether he was not the man whose victory over their champion had lately made a subject for the songs of their enemies. And David hearing



them talk in this way, began to be frightened, and so he pretended to be crazy, and Achish told them to drive him away; but it does not appear that they injured him, for there was a general feeling at that time that insane people were under the special care of God. In thus pretending to be insane, David seems to have lacked that faith which had previously characterized him, and to have felt that he must protect himself by

his own cunning and shrewd devices. Here he was wrong; he should have clung to that trust in God, which he had when he went forth to meet Goliath, and when perhaps every one in Israel trembled for him but himself.

David in the Cave of Adullam, and the Priests slain by order of Saul.

1 Samuel XXII.

ON leaving Gath, David fled to the cave of Adullam, which was probably near to the city of the same name in the tribe of Judah, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of Joshua. This being a strong place, and in his own tribe, he might hope to be in greater safety. Here he was joined by a number of persons who did not like Saul, and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Among the rest "his father's house," that is, his family, "went down thither to him;" and as Saul, in his rage against David, might have killed them as he did the priests, David was afraid of trusting them within his reach; and yet he did not know what to do with his aged father and mother, who were too old to endure all the fatigue which he was likely to suffer in different marches, as well as all the changes of war. So he went to the king of Moab and asked him to give them shelter; "and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what God will do for me."

The king of Moab was one of Saul's enemies, and so it was very likely that he would oblige David, who was now as much disliked by Saul as himself.

The king of Moab readily consented, and knowing Saul's hatred to David, he probably thought that he might receive some help against him from David, some day, in return. And David brought his parents "before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold," or fortress of Adullam.

For some time probably Saul had heard nothing of David, but now a report reached him that he was in arms, and at the head of a number of men, at which he was greatly alarmed. Being of a jealous disposition, he fancied that his son Jonathan, and the servants that were about him, had tonspired with David to dethrone him, or take away his kingdom; and

he accused them all with being traitors, since no one would tell him anything about the Why, no such conspiracy had existed, how then could they tell him?

However, Doeg the Edomite, who was with him, thought he should get into favor by telling him about Ahimelech, the priest, having given David victuals, and the sword of Goliath—for Doeg happened to be at the Tabernacle when Ahimelech and David were there.



LINKN EPHOD.

As soon as Saul heard what Ahimelech had done, he sent for all the priests that were in Nob, and on their appearance before him he spoke very rudely to Ahimelech, and charged him with being a conspirator, and with asking counsel from God against him. Ahimelech was no doubt startled and surprised, and defended himself by saying, that he thought David was on a message for the king, as he had told him.

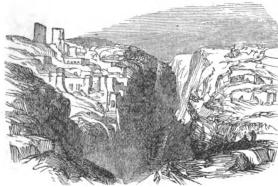
Saul would hear no defence. A man in a rage is like a wild beast; "and the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house."

Then the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou and fall upon the priests." The false accuser readily obeyed the brutish order, and, most likely assisted by some of his servants, Doeg slew eighty-five of the priests who wore the linen ephod, or priest's robe. After this he went to Nob, where he killed with the sword all the men, women, and children, and even the cattle, and so destroyed the whole population of the place, consisting of the priests and their families. This was very barbarous and very wicked, and Saul and Doeg would have to answer for the crime. Yet what God had foretold against the house of Eli, in which were perhaps many other wicked priests like his sons, who "made themselves vile," was now all brought to pass. These priests were of that family, and God had said by Samuel, "I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin I will also make an end."

David having defeated the Philistines at Keilah, is still pursued by Saul.

1 Samuel XXIII.

DAVID was now in the land of Judah, according to the orders of the prophet Gad. He had not long returned before the Philistines attacked a city and fortified place called Keilah, which stood near their



STRONGHOLDS AT ENGEDI.

country; and as it was threshing time, they took away the corn which the people were threshing and winnowing.

David was too much of a patriot—that is, he loved his country too much patiently to see it robbed by the Philistines; but he did not know whether he ought to oppose them, as he had no orders from

Saul, who was his king, and as his own army was very small. So he asked counsel of the Lord, and the answer was, "Go and smite the Philistines and save Keilah."

David's soldiers were afraid that they were not numerous enough for the enterprise; however, David asked counsel again, and God still said, "Go." So David attacked the Philistines, and beat them, and for his reward he got the cattle which they had brought to feed their armies, which were most likely of great service to him.

David having saved Keilah, we should have supposed Saul would have sent to him a message of peace; but "Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men."

So David left Keilah. By this time his men had increased to six hundred, for perhaps some of the people of that place had united with him.

David next went into the wilderness or desert of Ziph, and remained hid there among the rocks in a mountain, or sometimes in a wood. Here Jonathan found him out, and visited him, "and strengthened his hand in God," encouraging him to put his trust in him, and he told him that he was sure God would protect him, and make him at last king over Israel. Then David and Jonathan made a covenant to be faithful to each other, and Jonathan returned home.

Then the people of Ziph went and told Saul where David was, and Saul was quite pleased, and hoped he should soon take him. But by the time he had arrived, David, having found out that he was approaching him, escaped into the wilderness of Maon; and there again Saul pursued him and nearly overtook him; indeed, he was so close upon his heels, that his army was on one side of a mountain, and David's on the other; and he was contriving how he could surround the mountain, and so make him prisoner.

At that very moment news reached Saul that the Philistines had "invaded the land," and he was pressed to make all haste with his army and meet them; so he was obliged to give up pursuing David "and went against the Philistines."

Then "David went up from thence and dwelt in strongholds at Engedi," another place which lay in the wilderness of Judah.

# Saul's Skirt cut off by David.

1 SAMUEL XXIV.

WHEN Saul had returned from following the Philistines, he again found where David was. So he "took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." These rocks were in the wilderness of Engedi, and they were called "the rocks of wild goats," because these creatures delighted to be there. They are described by travellers as being very high indeed, and very rough, so that they are quite awful to look at, and being very difficult



to ascend, David and his men thought that they might safely hide in them. However, Saul was resolved to pursue them even there.

"And he came to the sheep-cotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave."

The sheep-cotes were places for the sheep to be led into at noon, to shelter them from the heat; the cave was a very large one, for there are caves in that part which, though very dark, are yet roomy enough to hold many thousand men. And here Saul laid down to rest, covering his feet, on



which he probably had nothing but sandals, so that he might keep them warm with his long robes and hide his naked limbs. But who should be in this cave but David and his men, who, while they were concealed in the farthest part, could see Saul come in at the mouth, it being light there, while they at the farthest end were all in the dark.

David's men were rejoiced, and advised their master at once to kill Saul; but David would not be his murderer, and so he only went quietly up to where he was stretched upon the ground,—being most likely asleep,—and he cut off the skirt of his robe; but he was even afterwards vexed with himself for doing this, as he thought it was an insult to him whom God had placed over him in authority, and who was therefore, in his mind, entitled to all possible respect. Saul might, however, see by this act of David,—when he should learn what he had done,—

that he was not a traitor to him, or he might easily have taken his life.

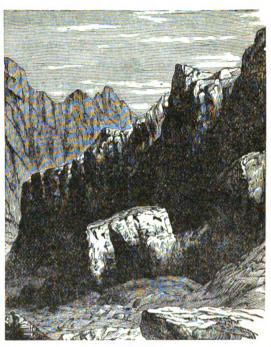
Saul having refreshed himself, left the cave and went on, without having any notion that David and his men were there.

David now boldly followed him out of the cave, and cried after him with a loud voice, "My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed himself," to show that he still wished to treat him with the respect of a sovereign. And then David asked Saul why he listened to reports against him, that he meant to do him no hurt. And he showed him his skirt which he had cut off

without killing him, though he could then as easily have cut off his head; and yet Saul hunted after his life as he would hunt a wild beast.

Though Saul might now have returned and fallen upon David, his heart was restrained by the power of God, or perhaps his men were at some

distance, and David could have escaped before he could collect them. David's appearance and kind words, and the mercy he had shown him also, astonished him, and softened his heart, and he called David his son, as he was,-David having first addressed him as father. —as he had married his daughter.—and he even was so much affected that he wept aloud. And he owned that David was more righteous than he, and had rewarded him good, "whereas," said he, "I have rewarded thee evil;" for though he had saved Israel by slaving Goliath, and fought against the Philistines, and charmed away his evil spirit,



DAVID'S HOLD.

yet still he had tried to kill one who had done so much for him. And Saul also confessed that he now believed David would be king, and his conscience told him that he was the neighbor better than he, to whom Samuel had said the kingdom should be given when it was taken from him.

In eastern kingdoms it is usual, when a new family comes to the throne, to have all the children of the old family killed, lest any of them should, in time, try to recover the throne of their father; and Saul believing that David would yet be king, and fearing that he would kill his sons, asked him to swear that he would show them mercy. So he solemnly declared that he would, which is what is meant by swearing on this occasion,—making a solemn promise.

After this conversation Saul went home to his palaze in Gibeah, and David knowing that he could not trust Saul, went with his men to the hold or place of safety among the rocks.

## Samuel's Death.—Nabal's Behavior to Davia.

## 1 SAMUEL XXV.

AT this time Samuel died; and as he had been a good judge when he ruled over Israel, and was a pious prophet, his death was lamented by all the Israelites, and he was buried "in his house at Ramah,"—that is, according to the common customs of those times, within the walls where his house stood, and most likely in a tomb in his garden.

But this chapter more particularly tells us about a rich man who lived in Maon, a city of the tribe of Judah, and who had great possessions in Carmel, another city of Judah, which stood upon a mountain of the same name.

This Nabal happened to be at Carmel shearing his sheep, and David, being in great want of provision for himself and his men, sent a very civil message to him, to ask him to let him have some, for his soldiers had been very kind to Nabal's shepherds.

Now Nabal, being a very surly sort of a man, "answered David's servants, and said, Who is David?—and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master;" meaning that he knew nothing about this David,—though he did know him, for he called him the son of Jesse;—and as for his servants, they were a set of runaway fellows, and he should give them nothing.

So David's servants, being affronted, said nothing to him, but turned their backs and went and told David how he had behaved.

David then ordered his men to put on their swords, and leaving two hundred to watch his baggage, he marched with four hundred men to punish Nabal.

In the mean time, one of Nabal's young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, how rudely his master had behaved to David's messengers, and that they ought to have been better treated, for, said he, "the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall unto us by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep."

Nabal's servant saw that David must be provoked, and so he advised his nistress to do something to reconcile him.

"Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal."

Before Abigail could reach David he was on his march to attack Nabal, but she met him on a hill, and lighted from the beautiful eastern ass on which she rode, and, according to the manner of the country, in token of high respect for David, "she bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet:" and then she begged David to blame her, and not her husband, that nothing was given to his messengers,—for Nabal was a silly man, as his name signified, and what could he expect from a fool?—This she said by way of excuse, and to save Nabal; which was a good reason for her using a name she ought not in any other case to have applied to her husband. Then she told David how glad he ought to be that he had not in his anger shed blood, and wished that all his enemies were but as insignificant as Nabal; and begged him earnestly to accept of her present for the use of his young men, as being scarcely worth his acceptance for his own use.

See how "a soft answer turneth away wrath." David now blessed God that he had inclined Abigail's heart to go and meet him; and he blessed her and her kind advice, which had prevented him from shedding blood; and he took her present, "and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house: see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person;" that is, "I am pleased with all your own behavior."

In the morning she informed Nabal of the danger he had escaped from David and his four hundred men, and he was so struck with his narrow escape that he fainted away; perhaps, too, he feared lest David should yet fall upon him. In about ten days after—he died.

When David heard of Nabal's death, he blessed the Lord. This was not because he maliciously rejoiced in his death, but because God had visited him with his own hand, instead of his having slain him himself, while he was in a dangerous rage.

Abigail's beauty, grace, wisdom, and piety, had won the heart of David; and so he sent to her at one of her husband's houses which was at Carmel, and proposed to marry her. She expressed herself sensible of the high honor of becoming his wife, of which she in her humility did not



think herself worthy, but rather fit to wash the feet of David's servants; and then, according to the custom of the times, she went to David's residence. So David, most probably, now became possessed of all the property of Nabal, who had denied him the most humble request.

David had also another wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel; but Michal, Saul's daughter, who was also David's wife, had been married by her father to another man, that David might not have any pretension from that to inheriting his crown.

# David's Flight to Gath, and Residence at Ziglag.

## 1 SAMUEL XXVII.

AS Saul seemed resolved to give David no rest, and there was no reliance to be placed upon his word, David thought that he had better once more seek safety in the land of the Philistines. So he went with all his men to Gath, and Achish was, no doubt, glad to get such a force of bold men from the side of King Saul.



CITY OF GATH.

When Saul found that David had left the kingdom, "he sought no more again for him," for it was of no use.

David, in all probability, now thought that the lords of the Philistines would be jealous of him if he continued in their royal city, so he asked Achish to appoint him a dwelling somewhere else. Achish did so very

readily, and gave him the city of Ziklag, said to have been about twelve miles from Gath. This city was in the lot of Judah, when the lands were divided among the people (see Joshua xv. 31); but it had by some means fallen into the hands of the Philistines, and now it was restored to one of Judah's tribe, and became David's own.

# The Witch of Endor.

## 1 SAMUEL XXVIII.

In this chapter we have an account of a grand preparation for war made by the Philistines against Israel. David was now in a difficult situration, for he could not like to join these heathen in fighting against his countrymen, and yet Achish had a right to look to him for aid, as he had given him protection. David, on being applied to by Achish to go out to battle, gave him an evasive reply, or one by which he might suppose that he would help him, and yet he avoided giving any promise: "And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do." Achish, however, trusted in David, and believed that he would help him.

And now the Philistines pitched in Shunem, a city on the borders of Judah, and Saul gathered his army together in a range of mountains called Gilboa. "And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled."

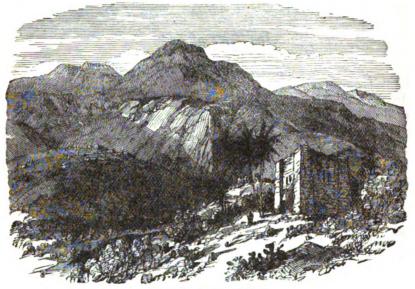
In his perplexity he would fain have known the will of God as to what he should do, but he had forsaken God, and so God had forsaken him; and he received no answer to his anxious inquiries, either by dreams, in which God used then sometimes to speak; or by Urim, which you remember was something in the priest's breast-plate which was used to direct in times of difficulty, and which was now in the hands of Abiathar, who was with David; or by prophets, for Samuel was dead, and none of his school at Naioth in Ramah was divinely directed to guide him.

So Saul determined that he would go to a witch, or woman fortune-teller, from whom he was foolish enough to believe that he should learn all that he wanted.

Saul knew that it was wicked to go to this woman, for he had even cut off some people for professing her art, according to God's command in the last verse of the twentieth chapter of Leviticus—"A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard (or fortune-teller), shall surely

be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them."

Saul, however, found out by his servants, that one of these witches lived at a place called Endor, a city not far from Gilboa. So he disguised himself and put on other clothes than he usually wore—perhaps made himself



SITE OF ANCIENT CITY OF ENDOR.

look like a countryman or common soldier—and, taking two men with him, he went by night to the house of the witch.

The woman knew that Saul had been very severe against such people as herself, and was afraid that this was only a scheme to ensnare her, and so inform against her, and she told Saul what she thought. This ought to have made him ashamed of himself, when he remembered that he had put others to death for doing what he was tempting this woman to do, and that he was breaking his own and the divine law. He might also have supposed that if the woman could not tell that he was Saul—though in disguise—she was not very likely to tell what would happen to him, or to know whether he would beat the Philistines or not. But his heart was hardened, and his mind was as dark as the night.

Saul then made a solemn oath, in the name of the Lord, that she should not be in any danger from what she might say and do.

This assurance having been given, the woman demanded whose spirit she should bring up from the dead. Saul's answer showed what had been the subject on which his gloomy thoughts had brooded, as in the darkness he had passed close by the Philistine camp to this obscure village, with its dark caverns, on the borders of the great plain of Esdrælon. "Bring me up Samuel." He thought how, at his last interview with the great prophet (1 Samuel xv. 22-29), Samuel had denounced him for his disobedience in the matter of Amalek, and had told him that the LORD had rejected him from being king over Israel, and had given the kingdom to a neighbor of his, who was better than he. He remembered, also, that from that time forward the communications of God's will to him had ceased; that disaster had succeeded disaster; that now the Philistines, his warlike neighbors on the south, had passed northward to the fertile plains of Esdrælon, and that he was so completely hemmed in by them, that there was no way of escape possible except by divine interposition, of which he was hopeless; that he and his brave sons could only fight and die, and that his death would probably terminate also the national life. Thus desperate, he sought this woman, who had a familiar spirit, or, as we should now say, was a clairvoyant. It is now admitted by all scientific men who have made the subject a study, that persons who possess this clairvoyant power, reproduce, when they are in the trance state, the thoughts and knowledge real or supposed, of those with whom they are in communication. This is just what this woman did, as you will see, if you read the whole narrative carefully. Saul asked her to bring up Samuel to him, and immediately there passed through her mind the venerable appearance of Samuel as Saul had last seen him-an old man, covered with a mantle. At this instant she recognized Saul, or if she had suspected before that it was he, her suspicions were now confirmed. Saul bowed himself humbly before the alleged Samuel, unaware that it was only his own vivid conception of the prophet, to which the woman had given form and shape.

The inquiry which the woman makes Samuel utter, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" may have been the woman's thought, the better to carry out her imposture, or it may have been suggested by the dread which Saul evidently had of Samuel. Saul's reply (verse 15) shows alike his desperation and his conscious foreboding of evil, while Samuel's answer (verses 16-19) reveals nothing new, but only affirms Saul's own apprehensions. It is worthy of notice that throughout the whole narrative it is evident that Saul did not see Samuel or any one except the woman, and his

own attendants. He trusted only to her description, and to the words which she uttered as from Samuel, but which were really only the reflection of his own thoughts. She told him that the Lord had departed from him and become his enemy; that he had rent the kingdom out of his hand, and given it to David, and that because he had not executed God's sentence against Amalek, on the morrow he should be conquered by the



SHUNEM, THE CAMPING-PLACE OF THE PHILISTINES.

Philistines, his sons should be slain, and Israel fall into the hands of their enemies. Saul knew all this before; but his other great sins were not rebuked; yet he was so terrified that he swooned away, for he was very weary and faint, not having eaten bread all the day nor all the night.

Then the woman told him she was not to blame, and hoped he

would not punish her, and she urged him to eat something; but he refused, till his servants at last joined the woman in compelling him; and perhaps in so doing she had a more certain pledge of her safety, after he had condescended to partake of her hospitality.

Therefore, after having eaten of a fatted calf which she dressed, and some unleavened bread that she made for him, Saul and his servants went away.

# David's March along with the Philistines.

## 1 SAMUEL XXIX.

THE Philistines having drawn up their armies near the city of Aphek, the Israelites pitched in the valley of Jezreel. And the Philistines marched under their captains, some commanding hundreds and others thousands. David also marched with the Philistines, and was the commander of the body-guard of Achish, who greatly confided in him. He must now have been in a great strait, for he could not fight against Israel

without becoming an ally with wicked idolaters and a foe to his own country; nor could he desert to the Israelites, for he would then have thrown himself into the hands of the revengeful Saul, and have proved a traitor to the hospitable Achish; nor could he quit his post and go back without at least exposing himself to the charge of cowardice. What was he



VALLEY OF JEZREEL.

then to do? We are sure he must have been sorely perplexed if the minds of the Philistine lords had not been moved to work his deliverance. They were jealous of David, and they could not forget his cutting off the head of Goliath of Gath, so that they were very wroth with Achish for trusting him. And they said, "Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master?—should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"

Achish was afraid of offending his lords, so he spoke very kindly to David, and told him to go back, and he gave him a very high character, which we should remember, because it is such a one as we should try to obtain: "Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me, unto this day; nevertheless, the lords favor thee not."

David was no doubt glad enough in his heart at what Achish said, but he pretended to leave him with reluctance. It is not at all consistent with a good man to pretend to anything; he should always be sincere.

But God, who had yet great things for him to do in Israel, delivered him in this way from what had well nigh been to him a most trying position. It would have been better for him doubtless to have continued among his own people instead of going to the Philistines, but great men are not always wise.

# The Ama/ekites plunder and burn Ziklag, and are pursued and slain by David.

### 1 SAMUEL XXX.

BESIDES delivering him out of his difficulty in fighting with or deserting Achish, David's enemies had been the means of sending him back to Ziklag, at a very important moment. For while he was absent, some of the Amalekites who yet remained in their land, went to avenge themselves upon him by plundering and burning the city which he had left unguarded, and they carried away all the women and children, and David's two wives were among them.

David and his men were so grieved that they wept bitterly, until they could weep no more.

David in his trouble knew where to go for help, and so he asked counsel of God by means of the priest's ephod with the Urim. And God encouraged him to pursue the enemy.

As they passed along, not knowing exactly which way to go, David's men found an Egyptian lying ill upon the road; and they took him to David, "and they gave him a piece of cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins," and the poor fellow revived a little, for he had had nothing to eat for three days and three nights.

Then David questioned him, to know how he came there,—for he probably suspected he knew something of the Amalekite army. And he told him that he was an Egyptian, a servant to an Amalekite, and that he had fallen sick upon the road, and his master had cruelly left him behind. And that they had been plundering the Philistines, and part of Saul's dominions, and David's city of Ziklag; having no doubt taken advantage of the absence of all the men of war from these places, who were met for the grand battle between Israel and the Philistines.

David then thought he could perhaps tell which way the Amalekites were gone, and he asked him if he could show him the way. The poor fellow said, that he would very readily do so, if he would promise not to kill him, and if he would not give him up again to his master, for he had had such a proof of his cruelty, that he could not bear to think of ever re-



BATTLE WITH THE AMALEKITES

turning to him. When he was so sick and ill he had left him to perish alone, when he might easily have placed him on a camel and taken care of him, and carried him away.

However, God permitted him to leave this young man as a guide for David; and he took him to the spot where the Amalekites were encamped, having most likely been told where he would find his master if he should happen to revive.

"And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah."—And David fell suddenly upon them, when they were quite unprepared to fight, and perhaps many were wearied and intoxicated:

and out of a large army, only four hundred young men escaped, who rode off on camels, or swift dromedaries used in those parts,—while David recovered everything that he had lost, and his wives, and alt the families of his men, and they got all the flocks and herds of the Amalekites, which they drove before the other cattle that had been taken from Ziklag; and they gave David the honor of bravely taking them, and said, "This is David's spoil."

# Saul defeated and slain by the Philistines.

### 1 SAMUEL XXXI.

THE day of recompense is now come, in which Saul must account for the blood of the Amalekites which he had sinfully spared, and that



ASHTAROTH, THE PHILISTINE GODDESS.

of the priests, which he had more sinfully spilt; and that of David, which he would have spilt, must come into the account.

Israel seems to have fled at the first onset. Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, three of Saul's sons, were the first among the slain, for the Philistines pressed hard to slay Saul himself, whom they seem bravely to have defended while he escaped.

But, alas, here is good Jonathan among the slain! Duty to his father obliged him to engage in this conflict against the Philistines; and, indeed, he loved his country, and could not bear to see it invaded by that wicked people. Well, God so ordered it that Jonathan did not see the misery which the sins of his father had brought upon his family and upon all Israel; and by his death, the way to the throne

was made open for David; but yet, when the righteous perisheth, and

when Jonathan is seen falling under a conquering Philistine, it is a matter of grief.

Still pursuing Saul, "the archers hit him," and finding himself wounded, he did not like to fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, and so he ordered his armor-bearer to thrust him through. But the armor-bearer was afraid; so Saul took a sword and fell upon it, and thus became his own murderer. His armor-bearer seeing he had slain himself, then in despair "fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men that same day together."

The Jews report that Saul's armor-bearer was the wicked Doeg, who killed the priests; and if so, it was indeed remarkable that Saul and he

should so perish together, and perhaps both by Doeg's own sword which he had used on that shocking occasion.

The day after the battle the Philistines went and stripped the bodies of the dead, and having found those of Saul and of his three sons, they cut off his head, and they stripped him of his armor, and sent it



MOURNERS.

to be set up as a trophy of their victory in the house of Ashtaroth, their goddess; this was an idol which Israel had often shamefully worshipped, and now their king whom they had desired was made a subject of contempt before it. And the Philistines sent all over their country to give public notice of their victory, and to give thanks to their gods. They also fastened Saul's body, and the bodies of his sons, to the wall of Bethshan, a city that lay not far from Gilboa, and very near to the river Jordan. Hither the dead bodies were dragged, and here hung up in chains to be devoured by the beasts of prey; so that, though Saul slew himself to avoid being abused by the Philistines, his sinful deed did not save him, for never was dead body more abused.

Little more than the river Jordan lay between Bethshan and Jabesh-Gilead, and Jordan was in that place passable by its fords. The valiant men of the city therefore made a bold attempt, and passing the river in the night, took down the dead bodies that they might decently bury them. They did this because they could not endure to see the crown of Israel so

profaned by the wicked Philistines, and because—as you must recollect—Saul did them a great kindness when he first came to the throne—as we



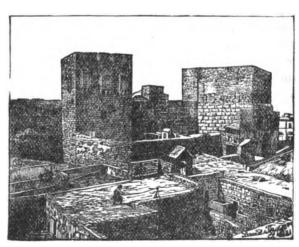
IN SACKCLOTH.

have seen in the eleventh chapter—where he saved them from a disgraceful surrender to Nahash the king of the Ammonites, and from having their right eyes thrust out.

Having got the bodies, the putrid flesh was burnt, and the bones were buried under a tree, and, in token of sorrow, they fasted seven days; not that they ate and drank nothing all that time, but they fasted every day till evening, according to a custom among the Jews.

Thus ends the reign of Saul, and we learn by it that those who live and do wickedly must expect in the end to die miserably,

and that a man's greatness will not save him from being punished for his sins.



PHILISTINE CITY.

# SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL:

SUPPOSED by some to have been written by the prophets Nathan and Gad; by others believed to have been written by David himself, or some inspired person of his time; and by others, to have been written as last claimed, and with such changes made by Eara as make it appear of later date. At all events the inspired authority of the book is beyond dispute, as it has been always accepted and cherished with the divine records, and is quoted in Acta xiii. 22; Heb. i. 5; and in a number of David's Psalms. The book has thirty-four chapters, and covers the space of forty years, continuing the history of Israel under the reign of king David, and telling some highly important incidents from the public and domestic life of that most wonderful of human monarchs.

## Execution of the Amalekite who slew Sayl.

2 SAMUEL I.



N the thirtieth chapter of the book we have just finished, you will remember to have read of David's returning to Ziklag, his own city, after the slaughter of the Amalekites, who had plundered and set fire to it while he was absent.

On the third day after the battle was fought with the Philistines, in which Saul and Jonathan were slain, a man arrived at Ziklag from the camp of Saul, "with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head," which were his marks of mourning.

And he told David about the battle, and that he was passing by the spot on Mount Gilboa, where Saul, being wounded, was leaning upon his spear;

and that "the chariots and horsemen" of the Philistines followed hard after him; that he asked him of what country he was, and he told him he was an Amalekite; and he desired the man to stand on him and slay him, for though wounded he might fall alive into the hands of the cruel Philistines; and so the man slew him, and took his crown or chaplet from his head, and his bracelet, an ornament which military men of that country used to wear on the wrist, and which was probably made of gold; and he brought them to David in proof that Saul was really dead.

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You are, perhaps, ready to suppose that David was quite pleased to learn that his persecuting enemy was dead, and that he himself should now become king in his stead. But David was better taught than to show a malicious spirit, and, instead of rejoicing, he rent his clothes as a proof of his grief at what had happened: and he and his men "fasted until even, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the land," who had fallen in the unfortunate battle, "and for the house of Israel," who would now be a derision to their mortal enemies the Philistines.

No doubt the man expected some great reward, and was not a little surprised to see David's grief. But the affair did not end here. David had always been very tender of Saul's life as the Lord's anointed, and you know that when he might be avenged on him, he never would hurt him.



CHARIOT AND HORSEMEN.

Now, this man said that he had killed him, and though he might plead that he did it at his request, yet that was no excuse, for it would be very wicked in you or me to kill any one, if he desired it. So David said, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified

against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed." And, at David's command, one of the young men fell upon him and smote him that he died.

This man was also an Amalekite, of which David had assured himself by asking him to say it a second time, and the people of this nation, being very wicked, were all sentenced by their Maker to be put to death.

The man's story is, however, not believed by many, as it does not agree with the account of Saul's death given in a former chapter, and as he was not consistent in all he said. You recollect that there Saul is said to have killed himself, but this man said that he it was that killed him. Then he said that Saul told him, his life was whole in him, and yet he was sure that he could not live after he was fallen, and so he slew him. From these contradictions it is supposed that the man really told a lie to David—that he happened to find the body of Saul dead on the field after he had killed himself—that he then took the crown and bracelets from him, and carried them to David, and—to make his merit appear greater—told him that his was the hand that gave the king the final blow. David knew not then but that all this was true, and so he caused him to be executed: thus you see

that the liar is sure to involve himself in trouble. This man framed this lie, and went to David hoping for a reward; but it caused his death.

This chapter concludes with an elegy, or funeral song, which David wrote on the death of Saul and Jonathan.

## David anointed King over all Israel.

#### 2 SAMUEL V.

AUL being dead, David—having before been anointed king—inquired of the Lord if he should go up to the cities of Judah, and God directed his way, and told him to go up to Hebron. So he took his wives and his friends and followers and went up. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah."

"But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;" and he made him king

over Israel. And when he had reigned two years, he was then forty years of age. So David was only king of Judah in Hebron, while Ish-bosheth reigned, which was during seven years and a half.

But when Ish-bosheth and Abner were dead, the tribes of Israel resolved at once to make David their king.

So all the elders went to Hebron, and David made a league or agreement with them, promising to do them justice on his part, while they promised to obey him on theirs. He



WOMEN, WITH TIMBERLS, DANCING.

had been anointed by Samuel as God's chosen king, and again as king of Judah, and now a third time as king of all Israel.

At this time he was thirty-seven years and a half old, having reigned in Hebron from the age of thirty; after this "he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah," making in the whole forty years' reign.

After David was anointed king, his first exploit was to gain Jerusalem out of the hand of the Jebusites,—the inhabitants of the land,—that city being

given to the tribe of Benjamin, but they had never wholly made themselves masters of it.

David conquered, and dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David.

This was the city which afterwards became so famous, where the Temple was built, and where the family of David was fixed.

And David built many buildings round about a spot called Millo.

Hiram, king of Tyre, also sent to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, and as Hiram's subjects were better architects than the Israelites, they were employed in building David a palace suited to his exalted station.

It was then the custom for kings to strengthen alliances or friendships by marrying many wives from great families, and David also did so.

The Philistines were, however, jealous of the union of Judah and Israel, and fearing that David might grow too powerful for them, they made haste to march their armies against him.

So David asked of God to direct him, and God said unto him, "Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand."

And David smote the Philistines; and in memory of his victory, he called the name of the place Baal-perazim, which means, the plain of breaches, because there the Lord had broken forth upon his enemies, just like the overwhelming waters of a flood, and destroyed them.

Notwithstanding their defeat, the Philistines again came with their armies, and pitched in the same place as before. Again David asked counsel of God, and he was commanded to march behind them, and there should be a rustling among the leaves of some mulberry trees,—which, when he heard, he was to fall upon the rear of the Philistines,—who would probably not hear the movement of the Israelites on account of that of the trees,—and so the Philistines would easily be overcome, the arm of the Almighty helping Israel against their foes.

"And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba" to Gazer; or from Gibeah, which was the same place, and a city in the tribe of Benjamin, to Gazer, a city which was on the borders of the Philistines, and about eighteen miles from the spot where the battle was fought. Thus God prospered David continuously in war, as in peace, because of his trust in him, and his faithful obedience to his commands from time to time. And David's whole life shows that he was wonderfully favored and honored by the Lord while he kept trusting in him, and committed no sin.



## Removal of the Ark and Death of Uzzah.

2 SAMUEL VI., VII.

THE ark had remained for fifty years at Kirjath-jearim, the place to which it was taken when it was fetched from Beth-shemesh, excepting that Saul once had it at Gibeah.

David now resolved that it should be near him in his chief city, for it was the sign of God's presence, and on that he relied for protection. So he took

thirty thousand choice men to guard it. And he brought it from Baale of Judah, another name for Kirjath-jearim, the place where it was.

"And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah," a part of



HEBREW CART.

the city of Baale, so called; -- "and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart."

Now the command originally given for carrying the ark was, that it should be borne upon men's shoulders, and those men should be Levites only



UZZAH AND THE ARK OF GOD.

of the family of Kohath, to whom no wagons were given for carrying sacred materials—so that putting the ark into a cart was forgetting the command of God.

The ark moved forward, and David, and all the house of Israel, played on a number of musical instruments to express their joy. But when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor,

"Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it;" to keep it from falling, "for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." So David ever after called the place Perezuzzah, or the breach of Uzzah.

You will wonder what crime Uzzah committed in only trying to keep the

ark steady: but it was forbidden to touch the ark on pain of death, and the priests were to carry it on staves only, and not to put their hands to it.

David was frightened at this judgment, and lest he should further err, he resolved to leave the ark, and wait further directions from God before he attempted to take it to Jerusalem. So he carried it aside to the house of one Obed-edom, who was one of the Levites, and it remained under his care three months; "and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household."

Obed-edom prospered so greatly that everybody talked about him, and the news of his success came to the ears of David. This encouraged him to try further and get the ark nearer to him. "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom, into the city of David, with gladness." Having learnt that none but Levites of the family of Kohath ought to carry the ark, he had it now borne in a proper manner, and when they who bare it had gone six steps, "he sacrificed oxen and fatlings," to express gratitude to God, and to atone for the former error.

On this occasion David laid aside the distinctions of royalty and put on a linen ephod: and he danced sacred dances, or expressed his joy by dancing movements before the ark, while the people shouted and the trumpets sounded.

So the ark was brought and set in its place, "and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord," and having blessed the people and given them refreshment, he "returned to bless his household."

After this, when David was at rest and sitting in the house which Hiram's servants had built for him, David spoke to Nathan the prophet, and told him that he did not feel satisfied to dwell in a fine house of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt only under a tent, for it had no other covering. And Nathan advised him to do what he wished, and prepare a better place for it. But God made known his mind to Nathan that same night, and told him to prevent David from building the new habitation for the ark, for he had never desired it; but as he approved of every good desire, he would build up David's house—meaning that his family should prosper—and he would establish his throne; and his son, who should reign after him, should build him a house for the ark.

And David was very grateful to God for his kind promises, and contented to leave building the house, since he commanded it, and he offered up a fine prayer to God, closing it with this petition,—and none of us can ask God for anything better,—"And with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever." This prayer you will find in the seventh chapter, with which it ends.

## David's Conquests.

## 2 SAMUEL VIII.

THE Philistines had long been great enemies to Israel. Samson weakened them, Samuel and Saul also contended with them, and now David makes an entire conquest of them; and he "took Methegammah," which is supposed to have been an eminence on which Gath was built, that place so famous on account of Goliath.

David also smote Moab and measured them with a line: he divided the country into three parts, two of which he destroyed, and he left the people of the third part to till the ground, and become the servants of Israel. Thus he also subdued these bitter foes of Israel.

David likewise smote the Syrians, for as he went to settle the border of his kingdom at the river Euphrates, Hadadezer, the king of Zobah—which was a part of Syria—opposed him; he, the king of Zobah, having some of the land which God designed for Israel. And in the battle the Syrians lost a thousand war chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen; and David crippled all the horses that they might not be used any more in war. And the Syrians of Damascus having joined their brethren against David, he also beat them, and slew two-and-twenty thousand men. Thus the Syrians also became servants to David, and brought him gifts, or paid him tribute. And in this war he got great riches, for the officers of Hadadezer wore fine ornaments of gold, which he took to Jerusalem, and out of his cities he obtained "exceeding much brass."

Besides these spoils, David received large presents from Toi, king of Hamath, which was also in Syria. For Hadadezer had been a great foe to Toi, and was often at war with him, and sought to take his kingdom from him; so in gratitude for his deliverance he sent Joram his son to David, to congratulate him on his victory, and to beg his acceptance of a number of vessels of silver, and gold, and brass. But David kept none of this wealth for himself; he dedicated or set apart all of it for the Lord's service, to be used when the Temple should be built,—and this accounts for the abundance of precious metals which David left to his son Solomon, for the purpose of raising that building.

David, moreover, put garrisons in all Edom, to keep the people quiet, and the Edomites became tributary to him, and he reigned happily and peaceably over all Israel. And these were David's chief officers of state:

Joab, commander-in-chief.

Jehoshaphat, recorder, or keeper of the annals, or memorable events of the kingdom.

Abiathar, high priest.

Ahimelech and Zadok, assistant priests.

Seraiah, scribe, or secretary of state, to correspond with or write to great persons at home and abroad, about the affairs of the kingdom.

Benaiah, captain of the body guards, who always attended David; these were called Cherethites and Pelethites, and are thought to have been those who accompanied David in his distresses, and perhaps some were Philistines who had joined him; though some suppose that they were archers, who used the bow and arrow; and slingers, who used the sling and stone, as David did with the Philistine.

David's sons, court attendants, waiting upon the king, and ready to do what he was pleased to order them.

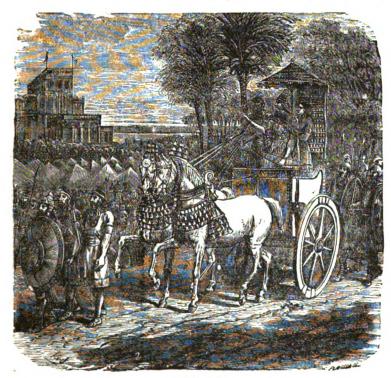
# David's Ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites, who, together with the Syrians, are defeated by Israel.

#### 2 SAMUEL X.

AFTER his wars with the Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, David having learnt that the king of the Ammonites was dead, according to the custom of friendly princes towards each other—sent to condole with the new king, Hanun, on his recent loss, and to assure him of his peaceable disposition towards him. And in this embassy he was influenced by a feeling of gratitude, recollecting that Nahash, Hanun's father, had formerly shown kindness to him.

Hanun's courtiers, however, persuaded him that David's messengers were only spies, sent to see the strength of his city that he might overthrow it. So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off half their beards, which was one of the greatest insults that could be offered in those parts. And he cut short their garments, so as to make them look ridiculous, and sent them away.

When David heard how they had been served, he advised them to stay at Jericho, a retired place, till their beards were grown, and they were fit to appear more publicly. The people of Ammon soon learned that they stank before David, or were disagreeable to him as any vile nuisance—bad neighbors which he could not like, and expecting he would not forget the insults offered to his servants, they collected an army of hired Syrians to the amount of twenty thousand men; and of the king of Maacah, a place in the tribe of Manasseh, a



SYRIAN ARMY.

thousand men; and of Ishtob, or Tob, supposed to have been the place where Jephthah fled from his brethren, situated in the land of Gilead—twelve thousand men; making in all thirty-three thousand men.

David heard of these preparations, and he was not idle, but "sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men" of Israel to give battle to these hired wretches, who, without even any cause of excuse to provoke them, had sold themselves, or had been sold by their princes, to slay their fellow-creatures.

"And the children of Ammon came out and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate" of their city, while their hirelings from Syria



were in the open field, probably intending to attack David's army behind, while the Ammonites in the city should attack it in front.

Then Joab attacked the Syrians, who instantly gave way, for being but hired troops, they did not fight very heartily; and when the Ammonites saw them run, they took the alarm and fled into the city. So the victory was won. Joab did not take the city, but was satisfied that he had dispersed the armies.

However, the Syrians were so much mortified at their defeat, that they collected a larger army, and a number of kings now joined together, to beat the Israelites. We are not here told what was the size of this army, but Josephus, the Jewish historian, says, it consisted of eighty thousand footsoldiers, and ten thousand horse.

David himself now seems to have taken the command of his army, and went out to meet this powerful force. And now the Syrians, probably very confident in their numbers, began the battle, and "set themselves in array against David," and they did not run away at first, but "fought with him—and then the Syrians fled before Israel, and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there. And when all the kings that were servants" or tributary "to Hadarezer [called before Hadadezer] saw that they were smitten before Israel," and could not dare any longer to contend with them, "they made peace with Israel and served them," becoming tributary to them, and paying them money for the support of the state. "So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more."

# The Murder of Uriah.

#### 2 SAMUEL XI.

THE Ammonites being now left to themselves, David sent out his general, Joab, with a large army, and they destroyed the cities of Ammon with their inhabitants, and besieged Rabbah their chief city. Thus was this wicked nation destroyed for their wickedness. Sin always brings ruin.

While this army was out, David remained at Jerusalem. And as he walked one evening to enjoy the cool air on the roof of his house,—which, like those in the East, was quite flat and made to walk upon,—he saw a woman washing herself in a neighboring house, and as she was very

beautiful he thought he should like to add her to the number of his wives. So he inquired who she was, and found that her name was Bath-sheba, and that she was the wife of Uriah, one of his officers who was gone out with Joab.

And now David, who had hitherto shown himself so good a man, did a most wicked thing, for he resolved to have Uriah's wife. Then, to cover his designs, that nobody might suspect what he was about, he sent for Uriah and treated him very kindly, and told him he might go home to Bath-sheba, who still remained in her house; but Uriah slept in the guardroom, and would not go home while his troops were faring hard in the field of battle. So David, having outwardly shown great kindness to Uriah, and indeed sinfully obliged him to drink till he was drunk, wrote a letter to Joab, which he sent by him, and said, "Set ye Uriah in the fore-



STORMING OF THERES.

front of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die."

This was very cruel and unjust, to order a brave man and a faithful servant to be killed; and, as he knew he did wrong, he contrived this

method that Uriah might appear to die by what we call the chance of war. But David gave this order to get rid of Uriah, and obtain his wife.

Joab did not know if Uriah had committed any crime or not, but he readily obeyed the king's orders, and Uriah was slain.

Then Joab sent a message to David to tell him Uriah was dead; and knowing that it was an unfair way of punishing Uriah, even if he had committed any crime, he concealed the order from the messenger, who did not go and say, Uriah is dead, as the king commanded; but, "the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." Joab pretended that the king might appear angry at exposing Uriah to such a danger, and might ask, "Who smote Abimelech, the son of Jerubesheth?—did not a woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez?"—So the king might tell the messenger that Joab should have remembered Abimelech's fate, and not so have endangered Uriah.

However, the king did not need Joab's pretences to help him out, for he said, very coolly, "The sword devoureth one as well as another," and Joab must take more care in future and make his battle more strong.

All this time David knew that it was not the sword that had devoured Uriah, properly speaking,—though he had been killed in war,—but his death was settled by himself, and that poor Uriah was, in reality, as much murdered as if he himself had shot him.

Uriah now being dead, there was no obstacle in the way to Bath-sheba marrying David. She put on mourning for a while for her husband, and then "David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife."

What do you suppose God, who sees all things, thought of this wicked act of David's? It did not escape his notice, and though David was his favored servant, the thing that he had done "displeased the Lord," for all sin is displeasing to God, and will be punished in this world or the next. The punishment that David brought upon himself will hereafter be related.

## Nathan the Prophet's solemn Message to David.

#### 2 SAMUEL XIL

AFTER a while,—when David would be less likely to suspect the nature of the message and its suitability to himself, and so might be made to condemn himself, as you will soon learn,—Nathan was sent to David to speak to him in a parable, and so by telling him a tale which seemed to refer to some one else bring home the charge of guilt to his own conscience.

This parable is very tender and pretty.

"There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his own bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but he took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him."

When David heard this story, which he thought was about what had happened to one of his subjects, but which was only a parable about

himself and Uriah, he was very angry at the man that took the poor man's lamb; and he declared that he should be put to death for so cruel a robbery, and make a recompense by giving him four lambs for the one he had lost.

Now here he pronounced sentence against himself; for the two men who lived in one city meant David and Uriah, who lived in Jerusalem. David



DAVID REPENTING HIS SIN.

was a rich king and Uriah comparatively a poor man, though an officer. The rich man had many flocks and herds, which were the chief wealth of rich men in those days; by which Nathan meant, that David, like the rich men of his time, had many wives: but the poor man had only one little ewe lamb, by which he meant, that Uriah had only one wife, which he had bought, as men did their wives in the East; and then, what he says further of the lamb was to show how fondly he was attached to Bath-sheba. Then there came a traveller to the rich man—an evil desire came to David—and to satisfy that, he took the poor man's lamb, meaning Bath-sheba, of whom he cruelly robbed Uriah. This was a very ingenious way of telling David of his sin, for, perhaps, he would hardly have borne to have been directly called to an account for it. But after he had pronounced sentence against

the rich man for taking the lamb, what could he say for himself in killing poor Uriah and stealing Bath-sheba?

Nathan, the prophet, being helped by God to speak this wise parable, was now helped to speak boldly and plainly to David. "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man." And Nathan told him how many things God had allowed him to have, and he would have added yet more if necessary. "Wherefore," then, said he, "hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the

sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, to be thy wife."

Then David confessed his sin and repented: and his repentance is beautifully expressed in the fifty-first Psalm, some of which we may explain when we come to it.

God, however, visited David with his displeasure. He had a



RUINS AT AMMON.

son born to him, whose mother was Bath-sheba, but God instantly took him away, to the great grief of David. However, another son was afterwards born to him, and him God spared; so he called his name Solomon, which means peaceful, because he hoped that God had pardoned him and was now at peace with him: and the prophet called upon him and desired him also to give him the name of Jedidiah, which means "beloved of the Lord."

# Amnon killed by Absalom.

2 SAMUEL XIII.-XV.

TWO of David's sons, who had different mothers, were named Absalom and Amnon. Absalom had a sister on whom Amnon laid violent hands, treating her in a very cruel manner; and though he once pretended to be exceedingly fond of her, he suddenly took so great a dislike to her,

that it is even said, "he hated her," and he ordered his servants to insult her and turn her violently away from his presence.

Tamar, in her great affliction at his ill-treatment, put on mourning, and attracted the notice of her brother Absalom, who desired her not to mind the insult, but secretly intended to take vengeance on his half-brother, whom he hated for his behavior to his own sister.

So, two years after, when it might have been supposed that he had forgotten all that had passed, he invited Amnon to go and partake of a feast at his sheep-shearing; and while Amnon was merry with wine, and probably intoxicated, Absalom's servants—whom he had previously told what to do—fell upon Amnon at the feast, before all his brethren, who had also been invited, and slew him.

The news at first reached king David that all his other sons had been killed by order of Absalom, and he was in great distress, and according to custom, as a sign of grief, rent his clothes; but he soon learnt that Amnon only was killed.

In the meanwhile, Absalom fled to his mother's relations, and his grand-father Talmai, king of Geshur, protected him for three years.

David was very fond of Absalom, and at last gave over grieving for Amnon, and longed to see Absalom again, who seemed to him to have been absent a very long time.

Joab, David's general, was friendly with Absalom, and being a subtle man, he contrived to get the king's leave for him to be brought back to Jerusalem.

Joab humbly thanked the king, and went and fetched Absalom; however, David would not allow him to see his face or appear at court, so Absalom was shut up in his own house.

It appears that this young man was very handsome, and without the least blemish; and his hair was so fine that whenever he had it cut, it weighed, together with the oil and gold dust, which was used for powder, upwards of three pounds. He was married, and had three sons, and a daughter named Tamar, who was very fair and handsome like himself.

After Absalom had remained two years in Jerusalem without being allowed to appear at court, he began to grow impatient, and perhaps thought that Joab neglected him in not carrying his efforts any further in his behalf. So he sent for Joab to talk with him about the business, but he had some reasons why he did not like to go. Then he sent again, but Joab still kept himself away. So, being resolved to see Joab, he ordered his servants

to set his field of barley on fire, which was near Absalom's, and when Joab learnt who had done it, he went to complain to Absalom.

Then Absalom complained of his hard fate, and was bold enough to excuse himself, and to declare that he was ready to die if he had done anything wrong. This message Joab gave to David, and he took compassion on Absalom, and allowed him to leave his house, and in token of reconciliation "the king kissed Absalom."

## Absalom's Rebellion.

### 2 SAMUEL XV.

AFTER David had been reconciled to Absalom, "Absalom prepared him chariots, and horses, and fifty men to run before him," that he might look very grand before the people, and that they might show that he was coming. Also, to prove that he was no sluggard, "he rose up early

and stood beside the way of the gate" of the city or the palace; and when people came to complain to the king about any ill usage from others, he stopped them, talked to them about it, and told them their case was very good and just, and their complaints were such as ought to be attended to,—but the king, he said, would not regard them. Then he lamented that he was not appointed their judge to do them justice. And if any one approached him he was very kind to him and kissed him, as men embrace each other in



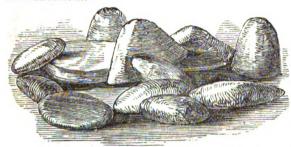
THE WAY OF THE GATE OF THE CITY.

the East,—and by this seemingly gracious behavior he won the hearts of the people of Israel.

Now, "after forty years," which some suppose was when Absalom might be about forty years of age,—but this is not certain,—Absalom asked the king for leave to go to Hebron, to pay a vow which he had made at Geshur, that he would offer some offering to God at Hebron, if he should be restored

to Jerusalem. So David gave him leave. But this was most likely but a pretence, for as soon as Absalom got to Hebron, which was at the convenient distance of only twenty miles from Jerusalem, he began to conspire to seize his father's throne. And he "sent spies throughout all the land of Israel," to see how people liked him, and to persuade them to prefer him to his father; and these were to say that when they heard the trumpet sounded anywhere, which he had probably employed men to blow, then they were to cry out that Absalom was king.

Absalom also got two hundred men of power away from his father, under the pretence of inviting them to partake of the feast of his peace-offerings; and then he invited and gained over Ahithophel, who was David's most clever counsellor, and by his various arts "the people increased continually with Absalom."



EASTERN LOAVES OF BREAD.

"And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." Then David, and his servants, and his body guard, instantly fled from Jerusalem; and though David urged Ittai, the Gittite, who

guarded his person, to leave him, with six hundred other Gittites, this man, who was one of Gath, would not act unfaithfully towards him, but resolved, with his soldiers, to live or die with him. Great numbers of the people, too, went weeping along with him, for it was a very affecting thing to see an old king driven from his throne by the unprovoked rebellion of his own son.

Zadok the priest, and Abiathar, and all the Levites, also, took away the ark, but David advised them to carry it back, being persuaded that if his conduct now pleased God, God would yet restore him to the spot where it was kept, and which he was accustomed to love.

And now the procession moved forward up the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem; and David and all the people covered their heads as mourners, and wept; and David walked with bare feet, in token of his humiliation.

And one told David that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, and

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David prayed, "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness;" meaning, that God would make him appear like a foolish adviser.

When David reached the top of the mount, he worshipped God and prayed, and here he was overtaken by Hushai, the Archite, who "came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head."

Now Hushai was no warrior, but a wise, prudent man, and so he would have been of no use to David as a defence. But he told him how he might serve him. And he advised him to go to Absalom, and tell him he would be his counsellor as he had been his father's; and so he might get at the counsel which the wise Ahithophel might give, and either inform David of it, or persuade Absalom not to follow it. Moreover, the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, would help him; these had two sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, and if Hushai told them what was doing, they could send their sons secretly with the news; and this was a good scheme, as no one would suspect what was going on, as he might have religious matters to engage him with the priests. "So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem," and both met together at the same time.

## Hushai deceives Absalom.

#### 2 SAMUEL XVI.

WHEN David was a little past the top" of the Mount of Olives, which we read of his ascending, "Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread," or, more properly, thin cakes, made without yeast, for such was the shape, and also the kind of ancient Jewish bread,—"and an hundred bunches of raisins," which were usually dried in the sun, "and an hundred of summer fruits," probably cucumbers and water-melons,—which are about Judea exceedingly fine in flavor, and much in use to quench the thirst occasioned by the great heat,—"and a bottle of wine," which was a goat's skin full, that being the bottle of the East, and not one of glass, like our bottles. This bottle would hold a great deal.

Then the king asked Ziba what he meant by his load; who replied, that the asses were for the king's own family to ride on, great personages being used to ride upon the beautiful Eastern asses. And the bread and fruit were to refresh the young men who were the king's guards and soldiers.



Then David inquired after Ziba's master's son,—meaning Mephibosheth, the son of Soul,—and he, perhaps, thought he had sent him this present, but could not account for his not coming along with it. Then Ziba told David a most wicked falsehood—"Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father;" meaning that Mephibosheth expected, now that David had fled, that he should recover the throne of his father, Saul. Now, there was no probability of this, for Absalom would have prevented it, if David could not have returned; and this story of the humble, quiet, and grateful Mephibosheth was made up by Ziba, that he might provoke David to take away all his lands and give them to him. I am sorry to say that, in this instance, David was too easily imposed upon; he took Ziba at his word, and supposing that Mephibosheth



EASTERN BAKER SELLING THIN CAKES.

was guilty of treachery, and aspired to his throne, he pronounced his estates to be forfeited, and said to Ziba, "Behold, thine are all that pertaineth to Mephibosheth;" that is, I give you all Mephibosheth's lands. And the vile man flattered the king, and hoped that he should yet receive further proofs of his favor.

While these things happened, Absalom and Hushai met together at Jerusalem, and Ahithophel also. As soon as Hushai, David's friend, saw

Absalom, he cried out, "God save the king! God save the king!." He, however, meant king David, for Absalom was no king. Then Absalom, supposing he meant himself, reproached him with deserting David, and said, "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" Hushai again answered very cautiously, still thinking about David being his rightful king, "Nay, but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide;" and if Absalom were king, why should he scruple to serve him? Now, he knew that the Lord had chosen David, and that Absalom was not king, and therefore he did not intend to serve him. There was a great deal of cunning in all this, which is not a praise-worthy thing; but God overruled it all for the good of David.

## Ahithophel's wicked Counsel defeated by Hushai.

### 2 SAMUEL XVII.

THE only impediment to Absalom's complete possession of the throne was the life of his father, for, as long as he lived, there would be many who would follow him. So the wicked Ahithophel proposed that he should be allowed to choose a thousand of the bravest men of each tribe, making twelve thousand, and he would pursue David, and coming up with him while he was weary and weak-handed,—or guarded by a few men only,—he would put him to flight, and then pursue him only and kill him. David being slain, all the people would then acknowledge Absalom as their king; for he said, "The man whom thou seekest"—David—"is as if all returned;" only secure or kill him, and it will insure the return of all the rest.

If Apsalom had ordered Ahithophel's head to be struck off for proposing to murder his father, and so good a father, too, he would but have done justice according to the law of God; but this wicked son was even "pleased" with the plan. However, God put it into his heart to ask Hushai's opinion about it. Hushai, you know, was David's friend, whom he had sent to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and he did so most wisely. "Thou knowest," said he, "thy father and his men, that they be mighty men," men of great bravery, "and they be chafed," or fretful and enraged in their minds, "as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field;" for the shebear, when she has any of her whelps hurt, is a most furious creature, and will then violently attack any person or animal she may meet. proceeded to say that David was "a man of war," who would not lodge with the people in the camp, but in some pit, where he might surprise his enemy, or at least escape being surprised. And if it should so happen that he should fall unawares upon any of Absalom's men, and they should flee, it would strike a panic into the whole, and the report would soon spread abroad that Absalom's army was defeated. Then he advised that "all Israel," that is, the fighting men, "from Dan to Beersheba," that is, from one end of the country to the other-where these places stood-should be gathered together to march against David, and then they might come upon his army like dew upon the ground, the drops of which are exceedingly numerous, and so they would easily slay the whole.

God disposed Absalom's mind to prefer this counsel to that of Ahithophel.

While these deliberations were taking place, Hushai informed Zadok and Abiathar, the priests,—who also were faithful to their king,—and he advised them to send directly to David and urge him to get out of the plain where he was, lest, if Absalom should yet follow the advice of Ahithophel, he might be suddenly overthrown, and to avoid the overwhelming army which, on his plan, would be sent against him.

David immediately followed Hushai's advice, and, passing the fords of Jordan in the night, he and his men all got safely over.

Ahithophel was so much mortified that Hushai's counsel had been followed rather than his, that he went to his house at Giloh, and there, having "put his house in order," or settled his affairs, he hanged himself. He also foresaw that David would now conquer and return to Jerusalem, and then he must suffer the death of a traitor; and he would rather become a self-murderer than fall into the hands of justice.

# Absalom's Defeat and Death.

#### 2 SAMUEL XVIII.

DAVID now divided his army into companies of thousands and hundreds, and set captains over them. Then he divided the whole into three parts, and appointed three generals to command them—Joab, Abishai, Joab's brother, and Ittai the Gittite; and he intended himself to be commander-in-chief over these, but the people would not let him go, lest he should be killed, which would have thrown them all into confusion and made Absalom king, who would have been avenged on them for defending David; and they advised David rather to stay in the city of Mahanaim, and send them succor by forwarding provisions and recruits.

And now the army marched to meet Absalom, but as it passed through the gate of the city David commanded the generals to "deal gently" with Absalom if he should fall into their hands, and rather take him alive than hurt or kill him.

"So the people went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim." This was not a wood in the tribe of Ephraim, but in the land of Gilead, across the river Jordan, and was probably called the wood of Ephraim because, in the time of Jephthah, forty-two thousand Ephraimites were slain near it by the men of Gilead.

Absalom's army was soon put to flight, and twenty thousand of his



22

soldiers perished. In their flight their ranks became broken, and they ran over the country in all directions; but vast numbers tried to escape through the wood, where they were easily overtaken by being caught in thickets; and some might fall into pits, and it is supposed that some were devoured by wild beasts; so that "the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured," for there were more people slain in it than in the open field.

Absalom fled among the rest: in passing through the wood, he met with some of David's troops, and in hastening from them on his mule, either his tine hair was caught in the branches of an oak tree, or, as is rather believed, his neck was stuck fast in a forked branch, and the mule going forward, left him hanging alive.

One of David's soldiers saw this accident, and ran and told Joab; who asked the man why he did not kill Absalom; and told him that if he had done so, he would have given him ten shekels of silver,—about six dollars of our money,—and a girdle, which was a mark of great honor and promotion. But the man told Joab he would not have killed Absalom for



a thousand shekels of silver, after David had given so strict a charge to spare his life, for he should have exposed his own life to danger for disobedience, and even Joab would then have condemned him.

So Joab went himself, taking three darts with him, and thrust them into Absalom; and ten young men who attended Joab thrust darts into him also, so that they were sure he was dead.

Having slain David's wicked son, the chief of the rebellion, Joab ordered a trumpet to be blown, to call back his men, that they might pursue the rebel army no longer, as they would now submit, and he did not want to shed any more blood.

Then they took Absalom's body and cast it "into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him," to be a monument

of his villany, and to signify that he ought to have been stoned as a rebellious son. (See Deuteronomy xxi. 20, 21.)

Absalom little expected to die such a death, and to be buried in such a manner. In his pride he had erected a very handsome monument for the reception of his body when he should die, in a place called the King's Dale, or valley—the valley of Jehoshaphat; for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance," though he had had three sons, but all were dead—"and he called the pillar after his own name," and it was still called "Absalom's place," when this history was written.

Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, was now with Joab, and he begged him to let him run and inform David of the victory; but as Joab did not wish him to carry news which would displease the king, as Absalom's death would, he told him not to go. Then he ordered Cushi, an Ethiopian,—or black, as some suppose,—to hasten with the tidings. After Cushi was gone, Ahimaaz still urged Joab to let him go, though he had "no tidings ready," but what Cushi had; then he allowed him, and he outrun Cushi, as Cushi took a hilly road, and Ahimaaz a flat one.

David was anxiously waiting for news, and so he sat between the two gates of the city; one gate being within another, between two walls that surrounded the place. And the watchman mounted the tower over the wall, and looked to see if any messenger was coming. And when he saw a man running, he called out to the king; and the king said, if the man was alone he brought news as a messenger, for if he had had others with him, it would have been a sign that they were part of his army put to flight. Presently the watchman called to the porter below, who kept the outward gate, that there was another man running, and that the foremost looked like Ahimaaz. And David was pleased, for he said that Ahimaaz was a good man, and would not run to tell him bad news.

To encourage David's heart, Ahimaaz called out, as soon as he could be heard, "All is well;" meaning that the victory was gained. And then he approached the king, and bowed himself before him, and blessed God for the victory.

Poor David was, however, alarmed for his wicked son, and his first question was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz evaded the question, and David waited for Cushi.

Cushi saluted David in a similar manner to Ahimaaz, and the king asked the same question about Absalom. And Cushi replied, "the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is;" meaning, in a delicate way, that he was dead, which he wished were the case with all David's enemies; as they rebelled against a king whom God had especially set up. And the king ran up to the watchman's chamber, and there he wept alone; but cried aloud in great distress, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

## David's Return to Jerusalem.

#### 2 SAMUEL XIX.

THE news reached Joab that David was much grieved for the loss of Absalom; the victory was therefore turned into mourning by the people, instead of being an occasion of joy, which was usual at such times. Instead of marching triumphantly into the city like conquerors, the people stole in like cowards, lest they should displease the king: for David would not see his generals, and covered his face with his mantle, as mourners did, and still cried, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Joab, at last, got leave to see David, and he spoke very boldly to him, and told him how ill he had used the people that had done him so much service, and saved his life, and the lives of the other members of his family, all of whom might have perished, had Absalom gained the victory. And he urged him to go and show himself to the people, and speak kindly to them, instead of lamenting what they had done, or his army would all desert him.

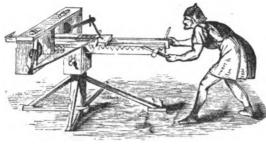
So the king went and sat in the gate, which was a public place of the city, where many people were constantly passing; and there they assembled and congratulated him on saving his kingdom.

Then the tribes of Israel began to talk about what David had done for them in saving them from the Philistines, and that something should be done to convey him back to Jerusalem. And David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, to urge them to arouse the tribe of Judah, who were yet negligent to join in restoring him; for "the speech of all Israel," or the invitations of the people, had been sent to him to return to his palace and city.

He also reminded that tribe, by a message, that they were his nearest brethren, he being of the same tribe; and as for Amasa, who had commanded Absalom's army, he would not only pardon him, but make him commander



in-chief, in place of Joab, who had, in many things, displeased him by his imperious disposition, and had now killed Absalom with his own hand.



WAR-ENGINE, NO. 1.

So all Judah directly joined the king, and he went back to Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, David's return was not quite in peace. The men of Israel were jealous that the men of Judah should have escorted the king without letting them know, and the

men of Judah were very angry at the words of the ten tribes of Israel. We shall see, by-and-by, what mischief comes from jealousy and quarrelling.

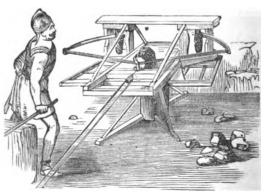
## Sheba's Rebellion and Death.

## 2 SAMUEL XX.

A MAN of Belial," that is, a lawless, wicked man, whose name was Sheba, took advantage of the quarrel between Israel and Judah, and advised the men of Israel to go home to their tents and not guard David

to Jerusalem: and they followed his advice, the men of Judah only remaining with David.

Then David ordered Amasa, his new general-inchief, to collect an army in three days, and go after Sheba. But Amasa not making as much despatch as he wished, he feared that Sheba would get a strong force and make head against him, and secure himself in a fortress.



WAR-ENGINE, NO. 2.

So he desired Abishai to take his body guards and pursue him. Joab was along with his brother Abishai.

Sheba, as David had apprehended, had taken refuge in a strong place called Abel. Here Joab and Abishai cast up a very high bank, on which to place war-engines to break down the walls, which were surrounded by a trench.

While Joab's soldiers were battering the wall, a wise woman—one renowned for giving prudent advice in difficulties—called from the walls with a loud voice, and asked to see Joab. Then she told him that Abel was a place well known for prudent people, and so, had he asked for a conversation with some of them before he began to beat it down, he might easily have settled the matter. Moreover, she asked him if he would destroy a city which was a mother in Israel, and was the protector of several other places, as a mother of her children; and also a part of the land which was the Lord's inheritance, not polluted by the heathen, but devoted to the service of God.

Joab replied, it was very far from his wishes to destroy the city, but there was a traitor there, and they must deliver him up. The woman agreed that his head should be cut off and thrown over the wall, and then told the citizens of the treaty she had made. The order was executed, and Joab sounded a retreat with the trumpet, and then returned to Jerusalem.

After David's return to his throne, Joab remained commander-in-chief, having killed Amasa. Benaiah also commanded the body guard. Adoram was appointed to the new office of treasurer of the taxes. Jehoshaphat was still recorder. Sheva was yet scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar priests. Ira was also one of David's counsellors.

## Saul's Sons Executed.

#### 2 SAMUEL XXI.

You remember that the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites in the days of Joshua, by appearing among them with clouted or patched up shoes, and old clothes, and mouldy bread, as if they had worn out their dress with travelling, and as if their food had become stale owing to the distance of the way; and so the Israelites mistook them for a people afar off, instead of inhabitants of Canaan, whom they were commanded to destroy. As the supposed inhabitants of a distant nation inclined to be at peace with them, the Israelites made a covenant not to hurt them; and then they found out that they were not from a distance, but Amorites, whom

they ought to have slain for their wickedness. However, they would not break their oath, having sworn not to injure them; but they made them servants, "hewers of wood, and drawers of water unto all the congregation."

Now it happened in the days of David that there was a famine for three years. David remarked this judgment, and was anxious to know for what



THE CROW, A WAR-ENGINE.

particular sin God afflicted the people. Having "inquired of the Lord" by the Ephod, he found that the covenant with the Gibeonites had been broken; for Saul, in pretended zeal for the glory of God, had tried to destroy these people as a remnant of the Canaanites, and some of them had actually been slain. To break a solemn and deliberate oath is a very wicked thing, and as the nation seemed to have Joined in it—and especially Saul's relatives—and no atonement had been made, this punishment was inflicted till the sin was atoned.

So the king asked the Gibeonites what would satisfy them for the lives of their fellow-countrymen; and they replied, the lives of seven of Saul's sons.

Then David took two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and five sons, so called, of Michal, but they were the sons of Adriel, who married her sister Merab; and therefore, as her sister was dead, she had brought them up. And these young men were all hanged on the hill of Gibeah, "before the Lord;" or to make atonement in the sight of the Lord. As God does not delight in human blood for sacrifice, and as sin could be atoned for by other means, the execution of these poor young men seems to have been a severe and unnecessary measure: but as David inquired of the Lord, we may believe that he was directed what to do, and that he did not rashly sacrifice innocent lives. Perhaps these sons of Saul had themselves been among the murderers of the unfortunate Gibeonites, and so justice overtook them at last.

Rizpah was deeply afflicted to lose her two sons in so painful a manner; she pitched a tent of sackcloth near their gibbets, and no doubt being aided by her friends and servants, she protected the dead bodies from ravenous birds and beasts of prey.

David, having no malicious feeling towards the deceased young menhaving let justice take its course—had their bodies taken down, and together with the remains of Saul and Jonathan, which had been in the possession of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, he had them honorably buried in the sepulchre of Kish, who was the father of Saul.

After this solemn execution, God was entreated for the land, and it yielded its usual harvest.

The Philistines still annoyed David, and he went out to battle in his old age; but he was now weak, and his life had nearly been taken by Ishbi-benob—supposed to have been a son of Goliath—who seeing David fighting feebly, went up to him to slay him, but David being quickly aided by Abishai, the giant was slain. This narrow escape of David made the people of Israel resolve that he should no more go out to battle, lest their glory should be extinguished by his death.

Several more battles afterwards took place between the Israelites and the Philistines, and several more giants were slain; one was called Saph; another was brother to Goliath; and another was of such unusual bulk that he had more fingers and toes than other people, and of such insolence that though he had seen the fall of the other giants yet he defied Israel.

## David's Heroes.

## 2 SAMUEL XXIII.

In this chapter we have the last words of David; in which, among other things, he describes the character of a good king, who must be just—rule in the fear of God—and be a blessing to his people, as are the cheering light of the morning, and the herbage springing up from the earth for the use of man and beast.

Then follows a list of David's most famous soldiers, and the exploits which they did, which you may read from the eighth verse to the end. Adino slew eight hundred at one time with his spear—Eleazar defied the Philistines, as Goliath had Israel, and while the other men of Israel fled, he stood his ground alone, and fought them, till his hand was so cramped that his sword was, as it were, fastened in it. "And the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people" who had fled, when they saw the victory he had gained, "returned after him, only to spoil" them that were slain, and to strip them of what they had.

Shammah met with a party of Philistines who were out plundering the fields, and he stood in the midst of a field of lentiles—a sort of pea—"and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord wrought a great victory:"



DAVID, THE POET.

for these exploits could not have been performed, had not God bestowed upon the men wonderful strength and courage to meet the enemies of Israel.

Three of David's heroes who attended him in his troubles, when he hid in the cave of Adullam, also performed a very great exploit. It being hot weather, David was very thirsty; and as there was a very nice well of water near the gate of Bethlehem, where the Philistines then were, he longed for some, and said, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" "And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines" that were encamped before Bethlehem, drew water from the well, and brought it to David. David, however, would not drink of it when they had got it for him; it was kind

in them to go when they heard him expressing his wish for the water; but as they had risked their lives for it, he poured it out before the Lord. He thought water obtained on such terms was too dear for him to drink. We

admire the love of these soldiers to their prince, but what was it to the love of Jesus Christ, who left heaven for us, took our nature to die for us, and then bled and gave up his precious life on the cross, that we might drink of the water of life, and partake of those joys which shall cheer the soul as water now relieves the thirst, and that forever and ever.

Abishai was another brave man, and slew three hundred men at once And Benaiah slew two Moabites that were as strong and bold as lions. He also slew a lion in a pit, in a time of snow, when lions are most fierce and hungry; and he slew an Egyptian, "a goodly man, large and tall;" and though he had a spear in his hand, he met him with nothing but a staff and overcame him.

Do not let us mistake here; this history is not told us to teach us to fight, but only to show us what those men could do when engaged in a good cause; and when God helped them against the wicked people who were the enemies of Israel.

### David's Pride in Numbering his People.

#### 2 SAMUEL XXIV.

AGAIN the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, for Satan moved David to number Israel and Judah, as we read in the twenty-first chapter of the first of Chronicles. Probably he thought of making some conquests which God had not commanded, and wished to go in his strength, reckoning on the number of his troops, while he neither consulted the Ephod, nor trusted, as he ought, in God.

Even the warlike Joab thought that David was doing a wrong thing, and tried to dissuade him from it, but he would have his own way. So after the land had been gone through in nine months and twenty days, "Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people to the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men."

When David had got the number of the people, his heart smote him that he had done what was wrong. He had perhaps felt proud to think what a number of soldiers he could collect, and what conquests he could make with them. But now he owns that in what he had done he had sinned. He had not asked from God direction, and he had acted like one who wished to do without him. And he earnestly prayed, "I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly."

So God sent the prophet Gad to David, and told him he must choose one of three things: seven years of famine, or to flee for three months before his enemies, or to have three days of pestilence in the land. David desired to fall into the hands of God rather than into those of his enemies; and God



DAVID IN HIS HOUSEHOLD.

sent a pestilence for three days, which swept away seventy thousand of his men!

David suffered by this, for it was a dreadful lessening of his strength, and so God humbled his pride. But let us not suppose that God destroyed the innocent on this occasion. It seems most likely that, owing to their conquests, Israel had become proud also; and so God, who hates pride, punished them in this manner.

God employed a particular divine messenger to produce this pestilence, and as he was about to destroy Jerusalem, he stopped him. "And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite." And when David saw the angel, he again confessed his own sin, but pleaded that the people, who were as sheep under his care, were not guilty of his sin; and entreated that they might not be punished, but that the punishment

might fall upon him. God, however, knew that they had sinned as well as David.

Gad now advised David to build an altar to the Lord in the threshing-

And David went to Araunah to buy the threshing-floor, to build the altar that the plague might be stayed.

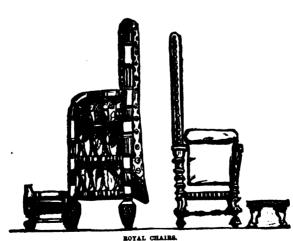
And Araunah offered to give him oxen. and the threshing instruments for wood for But David would not use the sacrifice. them till they were paid for, for the sacrifice would otherwise have been Araunah's, and not David's.

So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen, and built "an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-



ALTAR OF OFFERING.

offerings; so the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."



## FIRST BOOK OF KINGS:

On, the "First Book of the History of the Kings of Judah and Israel," presenting to us the reigns of the Jewish kings during a period of about 426 years, from the anointing of king Solomon to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is supposed to have quite a number of great authors, who are divinely led to the work, among whom are named David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Nathan, Gad, Isaiah, Iddo, and others, with the final arrangement of the prophet Ezra. In the old copies of the Hebrew Bible the First and Second Books of Kings form one book. This first book covers a space of 126 years, and has twenty-two chapters. Our Lord and Saviour has quoted from these books in Matt. xii. 42, and Luke iz. 24-27, and thus attested to their inspired character.

Adonijah's Conspiracy.—Solomon proclaimed King.

1 KINGS I.

ING DAVID was now grown quite an old man; he was almost seventy years of age, for he began to reign when he was thirty years old, and he reigned forty years; and the account in this chapter brings us nearly to the end of his reign. You remember how active he was when he fought Goliath, and escaped from Saul, and beat the different enemies of Israel;

but now it is said, "King David was old, and stricken in years," bent down with age. "And they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat;" even his bed, which is the warmest place when we are cold, gave him no warmth. So death was chilling his life, and hurrying him into the grave.

You have heard what bad sons Amnon and Absalom turned out, and now here is another son of David, who was not less wicked, "Adonijah, the son of Haggith." He was a spoiled child, "and his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?" He had never found fault with him when he did anything that was wrong; and so, says good Mr. Henry, "He in return made a fool of his father: because he was old and confined to his bed, he thought no notice was to be taken of him, and therefore exalted himself, and said, I wili be king. Children that are indulged learn to be proud and ambitious, and that is the ruin of a great many young people."

In order to effect his designs, Adonijah "prepared him chariots and

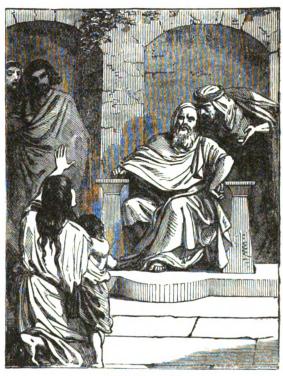
horsemen, and fifty men to run before him;" these were to make him appear grand, to wait upon him, and to fight for him. He also gained over Joab, David's famous general, and Abiathar, the high priest. But there were three chief men who were faithful to David, and these Adonijah could not get to use him ill; these were Zadok, the priest, and Benaiah, a brave soldier, and Nathan, the prophet, together with some others, and especially David's mighty men.

And Adonijah "slew sheep and oxen, and fat cattle," to make a feast of them at a place called En-rogel, and there he enticed all the king's sons excepting Solomon, and many of the king's servants.

Nathan, the prophet, lost no time in letting Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, know what was doing; for, like all ladies in the East, she lived

quite in retirement, and was ignorant of Adonijah's conduct. He advised her to go directly to the king, and tell him about it-or Solomon, to whom David intended to give the crown, would certainly lose it, and he and his mother would both perish; for cruel deeds have often been done, particularly in the East, by those who have got their crowns in an unfair way, lest the right heirs should rise against them, and obtain their rights.

So Bath-sheba went to the king, and told him all that happened, and reminded him that he had said that Solomon should



THE PROPHET NATHAN.

reign, and not Adonijah, and begged him at once to have his successor proclaimed. And while she was speaking, Nathan contrived to go in to the king also, and so to urge him the more forcibly to make no delay in so important a business.

Then David told Bath-sheba that he would certainly not break his word, which every good man ought to keep, and, therefore, what he had promised should instantly be done.

And he ordered Zadok, and Nathan, and Benaiah, to take his servants with them, and cause Solomon to ride upon his mule,—which would otherwise have been treason,—and to go to Gihon, a place where there were wells or waters, where many people would be assembled;—there the priest and the prophet were to anoint Solomon king, by pouring oil upon his head according to custom, and to blow the trumpet, and say, "God save king Solomon."

So they did as David told them; "and all the people said, God save king Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

The news soon came to Adonijah that Solomon was proclaimed king, for he had but just done feasting, when Joab heard the sound of a trumpet, and asked what was the cause of it; then Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, arrived with the tidings, and mentioned, as the last act of Solomon's coming to the crown, that he sat upon his father's throne.

All Adonijah's guests were now in a terrible fright, and ran away to their homes. As for this wicked son, he feared that Solomon would do to him as he would have done to Solomon, had he got the throne; and, lest he should be instantly killed, he fled away to the Tabernacle, and laid hold on the horns of the altar, which was always a place of refuge, it being thought a great crime to kill any one there,-nor did he move from his place till Solomon gave his solemn word that his life should not be taken away. However, though Solomon sent for him and saved him for that time, yet he was to behave better in future or take the consequences. "If." said Solomon, "he will show himself a worthy man," and never cause any more disturbance, "there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him," and he does any more such bad deeds. "he shall die." We find in this act of Solomon a great deal of humanity and forbearance; for when we consider the tendency of the times to cruelty, especially when there was any attempt made upon the throne, and any influence brought to bear upon the people which might result in division and endanger the position of the king, we are surprised at the mercy shown.

## The Death of David.—The Execution of Adonijah, of Joab, and of Shimei.

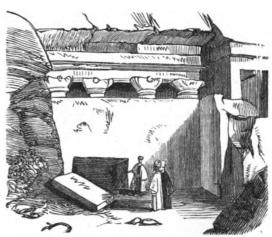
#### 1 Kings II.

DAVID, finding himself near death, gave Solomon the best advice he could about managing his kingdom, for he was yet but young,—about twenty years of age; and as David knew he was wise and good, he hoped he would continue so, and, though a child in years, be a man in behavior. Especially he told him to walk in God's ways, and keep his commandments, and then he might be sure that God would bless him, and establish his throne.

But there were several things which David had left undone, and he commanded Solomon not to fail to do them.

Joab had been a bad man, and had not only ill-used David as the Lord's

anointed, and disobeyed his commands in slaying Absalom, but he had cruelly and deceitfully murdered Abner and Amasa, as we have before read-"and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet:" he stabbed them while he pretended to embrace them, so that their blood gushed out on his girdle, and fell into his shoes.



SEPULCHRAL CAVE IN JERUSALEM.

Now, David ought to have punished Joab before, but his kingdom was often disturbed, and he perhaps feared the making of fresh enemics; he, however, did not forget that he, as a king, must do justice, and now, with his throne, he transfers his commands to Solomon to execute this wicked man. "Do, therefore, according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace."

Shimei had also been a base disturber, and had cursed David when he

was in trouble, but, as he had promised to spare his life, he had kept his word; however, his son must guard against him as a dangerous subject, and he would find occasion to visit him at last with the punishment of death.

While David thus remembered to do justice, he also thought of mercy, and was not ungrateful to Barzillai, the Gileadite, who had been very kind to him in his need; and he ordered Solomon to treat Barzillai's sons with great kindness in return, and to let them be provided for, and have the honor of eating at his table.

"So David slept with his fathers," for death is but a long sleep for the body, which is to rise again, as we do in the morning, after having been as if dead during the night. And David "was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem."

David had not long been dead when Adonijah again plotted against his brother Solomon, and very cunningly went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother,



DAVID'S TOMB AT MOUNT ZION

and asked her to beg of Solomon to let him marry Abishag, his father David's last wife. Now this request was altogether bad, and it proved that

he wanted to make himself more great, and so to increase his power. So Solomon ordered him to be executed as a traitor, and Benaiah slew him. Abiathar, the priest, was also probably in this plot, or Solomon would not, as he did, have ordered him instantly to be banished to Anathoth; and in thrusting out Abiathar from the priestly office, he fulfilled the threatening of God against the sons of Eli. God had told Eli that the priesthood should depart from his house, and Abiathar, the last of his house, was now, for his crimes, made to bring the threatening to pass. So will all the threatenings of God against the wicked certainly come to pass at last.

The alarm of Joab, who now fled for safety to the horns of the altar, showed, too, that he had good reason to dread Solomon's vengeance; and though this was a very sacred place, yet, so great a criminal was this man, that the king ordered him not to be allowed to shelter himself even there, and "Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, went up, and fell upon him, and slew him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness." Thus was this wicked man punished at last.

The next criminal that we read of in this chapter was Shimei.

Solomon, having been warned about him by his father, sent for him, and told him to go and live at Jerusalem, but, if he ever ventured to leave that place, he would punish him with death. Shimei, who perhaps felt that he deserved death then, for his conduct towards the Lord's anointed, David, was very well pleased with this order, which, having sworn to observe, he went to Jerusalem, and lived there for three years. At the end of that time, two of his servants "ran away unto Achish, son of Maachah, king of Gath," and Shimei, either forgetting his oath in his eagerness to get back his servants, or thinking himself secure after so long a time, rashly ventured to ride off to Achish, and returned with his servants. Solomon, being informed of this, sent for Shimei, told him of his wickedness in breaking a sacred oath, of his disobedience to his royal command, of his past behavior to his father, which merited death, and of the justice of his sentence, and then ordered Benaiah to slav him.

Thus, having punished these wicked and troublesome characters, "the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon."

Benaiah was now made chief captain in the room of Joab, and Zadok priest in the room of Abiathar. All things were in peace at home, and no surrounding enemy dared to attack the wise and prosperous Solomon, whose tact and power had already begun to be known among his own people, as also the nations scattered around him.

# Solomon's Marriage to Pharaoh's Daughter.—His striking Dream and Prayer for Wisdom.—His wonderful Judgment.

#### 1 KINGS III.

OLOMON now chose a wife, who was no less a person than the daughter of Pharaoh, the then powerful king of Egypt, a country near Canaan. This, you know, was a very long time after the reign of the Pharaoh who lived when Israel left Egypt. It was four hundred and seventy-seven years after—but still a Pharaoh reigned, for this was a common name given to the kings of Egypt, as Czar is now to the emperors of Russia. The Egyptians were heathen, but it is said by the Jews that Pharaoh's daughter embraced the Jewish religion when Solomon married her, for it would have



EGYPTIAN LADIRS.

been a wicked thing in him, and contrary to the command of God, to have married a heathen.

At this time the Jews had no temple, and they worshipped on the high places or hills, among which was Gibeon, where there was an altar, and here Solomon went and offered a thousand burntofferings.

While Solomon was at Gibeon he had a remarkable dream, and God appeared to him in the dream, and said to him, "Ask what I shall give

thee." And Solomon said, "I am but a little child," meaning that he knew but very little, and asked God to give him wisdom. God was pleased with Solomon's humility, for he is always pleased with the humble: and he told Solomon that as he had asked neither long life, nor riches, nor to conquer his enemics, but had asked only for wisdom, he would give him "a wise and an understanding heart" beyond every one beside; indeed, there never was nor ever again should be so wise a man in the world. He should also have what he had not asked—he would make him more rich and

honorable than all other kings; and, if he did but keep his commandments, he would also add to these enjoyments that of a good old age.

So he went to Jerusalem, and there, in token of his gratitude to God, he "offered up burnt-offerings," and made a feast to all his servants, which was probably out of the peace-offerings he had presented, as was often usual.

Solomon's wisdom was now soon tried. Two women, that were harlots, or inn-keepers, lived in one house, and both of them had little infants. It happened that one of them smothered her poor little infant, by lying on it while she was asleep. So, what did she do, but went to the bed of the other woman, and changed the dead child for the living one that she found lying in the bosom of its mother; and as the other mother was fast asleep, she knew nothing about it till she awoke in the morning. When she awoke, she discovered how she had been cheated, and went to Solomon to make her complaint. Each, in his presence, declared the child belonged to her, and words ran very high. "The other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king."

This must have puzzled any other judge; for how was it possible to know which to believe? However, the king soon settled the matter. "Bring me a sword," said he; "and they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other."

You are perhaps ready to cry out, Why, surely Solomon would not be so cruel! No, he did not intend to be cruel; he knew what would be likely to happen to help him to judge aright. As soon as the real mother supposed that her child was to be cut to pieces, rather than it should be killed, she was willing to give it up, and she instantly cried out, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in nowise slay it." But the other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it;" which no real mother would have said, for kind mothers love their children too well to be so cruel.

Solomon then directly saw which was the mother, and he said, "Give her the living child, and in nowise slay it; she is the mother thereof."

You may suppose how gratefully she took, and how warmly she pressed her infant to her bosom; how her tears were turned into smiles, and her heaviness into joy. The people, too, were all delighted to see the kind mother recovering her dear infant. "And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared," that is, honored, "the king—for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

### Solomon's Prosperity and Honor.

### 1 Kings iv.

when he began to reign, for he was then only king over Judah; and, as we shall find by-and-by, Solomon's son was not, for his kingdom was divided.

In this chapter we find a list of his chief officers; besides which, he had twelve officers, one for each month in the year, who took care to provide food for his great household; and one of these, "the son of Abinadab,"—who was probably a very industrious and diligent officer—was honored by Solomon's giving him his own daughter Tappath, as his wife: so that he became the king's son-in-law.

And now "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude;" they had no war and no pestilence to lessen their large



EGYPTIAN LADIES' TOILET.

numbers, and still kept increasing. And so God blessed them, and they were "eating and drinking, and making merry," cheerfully enjoying the good things which God kindly bestowed upon them.

And though Solomon was only king of Judah and Israel, yet he received tribute from many other kingdoms around him, and in this way might be said to reign over them also; for the princes and people of those kingdoms "brought presents, and served him all the days of their life."

Think how numerous Solomon's household and attendants must have been, when his provision for one day only "was

thirty measures of fine flour," each measure being more than seventy-five gallons; "and threescore measures of meal; ten fat oxen; and twenty oxen out of the pastures," which were not fatted; "and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl." So that they had plenty of beef from the oxen, mutton from the sheep, and venison from the harts, bucks, and deer. All this quantity of daily provision

being put together, it has been reckoned that at least nearly fifty thousand persons must have been fed daily at the palace of the Israelitish king! Most probably, among these were included his guards, each of whom received a *ration*, or soldier's portion, from the king's store.

Every man now dwelt safely "under his vine, and under his fig-tree," which grew around the dwellings to afford shelter from the sun, and which were principal trees in the land of Judah; and "from Dan even to Beersheba,"—the two extreme parts of the land,—the people enjoyed this blessing all the days of Solomon.

"And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." Besides these, he had also swift dromedaries,

that might go post for him, and all these were constantly well supplied with barley and straw.

"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart," that is, a capacity of mind to know everything; so that what he knew seemed countless, "even as the sand that is on the sea-shore." "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country," or people of the East countries—so called, just as the Israel-



AN EASTERN VINEYARD.

ites were called the children of Israel: and it also excelled "all the wisdom of Egypt." He must, then, have been wise indeed, for the Arabians and Persians, who were among the children of the East, were famous for wisdom; and Egypt was so renowned for it, that philosophers, or men esteemed already wise, even went there, from other countries, to get more wise,—for Egypt was called the mother of the arts and sciences; all clever kinds of inventions having had their origin there. "And he spake three

thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." Proverbs are wise sayings; many of which are to be found in the book so called, and written by him: and, besides these, he wrote a number of poems. he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon," which is a large and noble tree, one of the finest in the world, "even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," the lowest and least herb. So that he understood trees and plants of all sorts and sizes between the greatest and the least; or, in other words, he was wonderfully skilled in what is now called botany. "He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." He understood the nature of all sorts of animals in the earth, air, and sea, and discoursed of their names, kinds, qualities, and use, with the greatest ease; so that he was a complete master of what is called natural history. And this is the more wonderful, because even the wisest men, who now study these things with constant attention, can only take some one part of them, in order to be master of it-one fixing on insects, of which the numbers are astonishing; another on birds; another on beasts; another on fish; and so for the rest.

No wonder that "there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."

### Preparation for building the Temple.

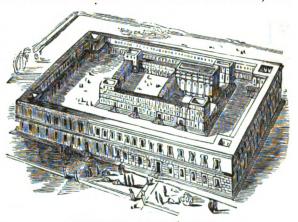
#### 1 Kings v.

AS soon as Solomon was fixed upon his throne, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to him, to congratulate him on his peace and prosperity. Solomon took the opportunity of sending a letter back by the ambassadors, to inform Hiram that he intended to build a temple for the worship of God, which the troublous times of his father's reign had prevented from being done; but now, all the enemies of Israel having been put under the soles of his father's feet—that is, in other words, being conquered as one trampled upon, and there being "rest on every side," he would not delay to complete so grand a design. But he wanted some help from Hiram. There were very fine cedar trees, a most durable wood for building, which grew on that part of Lebanon belonging to Hiram, and he asked that he would have such a quantity as Solomon needed, felled for him; and that he would furnish Sidonian workmen, who were skilled in hewing timber, to help Solomon's servants, at such wages as Hiram should appoint.

So Hiram, who was very friendly towards Solomon, promised to do as he wished; and this was a very important point gained towards building the temple, for the Jews were mostly employed in agriculture—that is, ploughing, sowing, and reaping the fruits of the earth, and knew little about the art of fine building, or even of hewing down trees, which, to be done well, should be done at a particular time, and in a certain way, and then they should undergo some preparations to make them fit for use.

Hiram having kept his word, Solomon paid him for his trees and workmen's wages, by giving him what was needed in his country, where, though the people were skilled in growing and working timber, they did not so well understand how to grow the fruits of the earth. "And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and

twenty measures of pure oil; thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year." These measures are not of the same sort as ours, but have been carefully reckoned, and amount to twelve millions nine hundred and sixty thousand pounds of wheat, and twenty-one thousand six hundred pounds of oil; so that Hiram was very well paid, and this pay



SUPPOSED FORM OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

was given every year, as long as the temple was in building, and some think atterwards continued as long as Hiram lived.

Besides the help of Hiram's men, Solomon employed thirty thousand Israelites, ten thousand of whom worked every month in turns; so that each one was one month in a quarter of a year laboring for Solomon, and two months at home looking after his own grounds and family. This was very kind and considerate, and showed that he was not a tyrant of a king, who would have allowed them no time for themselves: and he employed Adoniram "over the levy," that is, over those men who, being got together by the king's orders, were called "a levy;" and Adoniram had to see that they did their duty, and rested in their turns.

So Solomon had "threescore and ten," that is, seventy, thousand men,

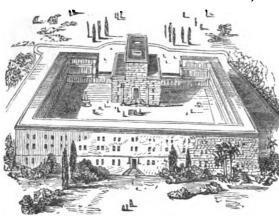
that "bare burdens," or carried stones from the mountains out of which they were dug; and "eighty thousand hewers in the mountains," that dug the stones out of the quarries, and made them into proper shapes; and he employed three thousand three hundred officers, to overlook them, and see that none were careless or idle.

"And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, and costly stones," such as fine marble, "and hewed stones to lay the foundation of the house." "So they prepared timber and stones to build the house," or temple.

### The Building of the Temple.

### 1 KINGS VI.

In the fourth year of Solomon's reign he commenced the building of the temple." The house which king Solomon built for the Lord was thirty-six yards long, twelve wide, and eighteen high; but to this were added courts and colonnades, where the people might assemble to perform their devotions and assist at the sacrifices, without being exposed to the



FORM OF SECOND TEMPLE

open air. So that the whole put together was a very grand object.

There was one very remarkable thing in the building of this temple: "The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in

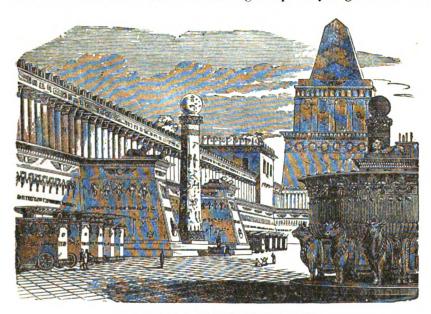
building." The joints were all made by the clever workmen, God blessing them particularly in this work with more than usual skill, so that each joint fitted exactly into the one for which it was made, and required nothing more than a wooden mallet, at most, to fit it in its place. This temple is mentioned in Scripture, as a type or likeness of heaven—that is, it was a place for serving God, and where God particularly blessed his people.

and so is heaven; and this curious fact, about the stones all fitting without any more noise and labor, had its meaning, and may remind us that all those who are to be pillars in the temple of God above, or to remain there fixed forever, must be first made fit for it; and this they are by the Holy Spirit of God making them holy, for nothing that is defiled or wicked can enter there.

If you read the chapter you will, perhaps, find a few things which you cannot understand. We are told that "the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers." What are knops? They are said to have been ornaments of the shape of an egg.

And then we read of the preparing of "the oracle." The oracle was a place where God, in a wonderful way, spoke his mind and will, as one man speaks to another.

You must also observe that there was a great quantity of gold used in the



INTERIOR VIEW OF ANCIENT TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.

building: "So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he over-

laid with gold." "And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without."

Solomon also made two cherubims of olive-tree, a tree that grows commonly in that part of the world where Judea was. These cherubims were tall and large figures, with widely-extended wings, and they stood in the oracle and are supposed to have been emblems of angels, who always wait God's commands, and, like winged creatures, are swift in their motions to do his will. These, too, were overlaid with gold. The whole of this golden work may teach us—as gold is the purest of metals—that the place where God will be to give his blessings, and the persons who acceptably serve him, must all be pure and holy.

This temple was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and finished in the eleventh; "so was he seven years in building it."

The various estimates of the cost of the temple, some of them very extravagant, are based upon so many uncertainties, that it is useless to record them. We do not know whether the provision made by David was sufficient for the temple or not; we do not know what were the quantities or values of the other metals beside gold and silver, which he provided, nor whether other quantities of these were furnished; we do not know whether the payments (a very large sum) for the timber and stone used in the temple, were paid from these treasures of David, or from taxes levied by Solomon; and finally, we do not know whether the talents of gold (1 Chronicles xxii. 14 and xxix. 4, 7) were the gold talent, worth about \$56,000, or the silver talent, which was worth only \$1,760, nor whether the talents were stated in round or exact numbers. But whatever value may be placed on the sums expended for the building, we may be sure that it was the most costly temple ever erected for the worship of Jehovah on the earth.

Solomon's Houses.—The Ornaments and Utensils for the Temple.

1 Kings vii.

AFTER Solomon had built a house for God, and served him first, he then erected one for himself; but he did not make that haste to get it completed which he did to complete the temple, for it took thirteen years in building. "He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon," which, from the account given of it in this chapter, was larger than the temple;

and this was necessary, as only the priests went into the temple to perform the services, whereas into this went not only Solomon's family, but his courtiers and nobles, and all foreign ambassadors, and whoever had any business with him, which required various rooms to receive them in. This house took its name from its being built of wood of the cedars of Lebanon, and is thought by some to have been Solomon's summer house, where he could get cool and refreshing air when the weather was exceedingly hot.

"Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife:" and some think that Solomon's dwelling-house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and that of Pharaoh's daughter, all stood close to each other,—the house of Lebanon being that where Solomon went to administer justice, if any of his subjects had been wronged or ill-treated.

"And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre;" not the king, but a man of the same name, who is more particularly described in the next verse: "He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, his father was a man of Tyre;" his mother was, therefore, a Jewess, but his father a Tyrian, though some think not a native Tyrian, but a Jew that resided there and so got the name. He was "a worker in brass;" or, as we should have called him, a coppersmith: "and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass;" that is, he was very skilful. "And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work."

"He cast two pillars of brass," eighteen cubits, or nine yards high, and more than six yards round. And he made chapiters to set upon them; these were large ovals made something like a crown, to set upon the tops of the pillars. And he made nets of chequer-work, that is, work very much varied in its forms—and these are said to have been ornaments like thick branches of trees: "and wreaths of chain-work," like fringes, as some think, twisting round the chapiters. He also ornamented the chapiters with "lily-work," or ornaments made in the shape of lilies. To these ornaments he also added two hundred in the shape of pomegranates. You remember, ornaments like this Eastern fruit adorned the dress of the high priest. "And he set up the pillars at the porch of the temple," and called the right pillar "Jachin," and the left "Boaz;" or rather, Solomon gave them their names. These names had meanings of importance: "Jachin" means, he will establish; and "Boaz" means, in strength; signifying, that

as long as God was worshipped there in purity, the building should be established in strength.

Then he made "a molten sea," the size of which you may guess, by remembering the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the end of his fingers, which, you have before observed, was that of a cubit. was ten such lengths across it. This was a large vessel, which, on account of the great quantity of water it held, was called "a sea," for it was capable of holding about two thousand baths, as the measures were then called: that is, about two hundred and fifty of our hogsheads, which you know are very large casks of themselves: what, then, must a vessel be which would hold two hundred and fifty times what they could contain! You will read in the chapter, that "under the brim of it round about, there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit." These knops were a sort of ornament so called, something like the shape of an egg, and were, perhaps, cocks out of which the water was turned, and of these there were six hundred! sea, as it might well be called, stood upon twelve oxen, cast in the same way, with their faces all turned towards the outside, and their mouths, also, might be used as spouts or cocks to let out the water. This vessel was as strong as it was large, for it was "a hand-breadth thick," so that a man's hand might be laid flat upon the edge anywhere round it. And it contained two thousand baths, so that, though it would hold more, it was not necessary to fill it, which might have caused inconvenience. This vessel was for the priests to wash themselves, and, as most of the things of the temple had a hidden meaning in them, and referred to spiritual blessings which should be enjoyed from Jesus Christ, it is considered as an emblem of him who is called, among other names, "the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," because his blood, believed in as shed for sinners, cleanses the soul from guilt and sin, as water cleanses the body.

"And he made ten bases of brass," or, as we should call them, pedestals, or stands, with wheels to them; and he made "ten lavers," or basins, "of brass, each laver holding forty baths," or two hundred gallons, and being four cubits across: and he set the lavers on the bases or stands, which, having wheels, could be easily moved about as they were wanted: these were used for the priests to wash their burnt-offerings in. The bases were finely ornamented with cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, and all were cast in one mould, and exactly of the same size.

Hiram also made other smaller lavers, which, it is said, were used to put the ashes of the sacrifices into, and shovels, with which the ashes were



collected together, and basins, to receive the blood of the sacrifices and sprinkle it.

All these things were made of bright brass, and were cast in the clay ground, or in the plain of Jordan, where a large mould was made for them, and the melted brass poured in.

Beside the things already named, Solomon made—that is, ordered to be made—an altar of gold, on which incense was to be offered; and a table of

gold, on which to set the shew-bread; and ten gold candlesticks, ornamented with flowers, having each seven lamps, making seventy lights, and tongs of gold, which were used to take the wicks out of the oil, and put into the lamps; and bowls to keep the oil in: and snuffers to trim the lamps; and basins to catch the blood of the sacrifices: and spoons to hold the incense; and censers of pure gold, with which to carry the coals from one altar to another, and on which the incense was burnt: and hinges of gold for the doors.

Lastly, Solomon laid up in the temple all the trea-



BRAZEN LAVER.

sure that remained, and would use none for himself; and this might serve for purchasing sacrifices, and repairing the house of the Lord.

This temple soon perished, and its worshippers died. It retained its splendor only about thirty-four years, when Shishak, king of Egypt, took Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the temple; and, after having been pillaged at other different times, it was finally burnt and plundered by the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar, having stood altogether only about four hundred years.

### The Dedication of the Temple.

#### 1 Kings viii.

Israel, and they attended the priests who brought the ark from out of the place where it had remained in David's time, in the city of David, and placed it in the temple. There, also, they put the materials of the old tabernacle used from the time of Moses, that they might never be employed for any common purposes; and all the holy vessels were carefully lodged there—that is, the candlestick, the shew-bread table, the incense altar, and other like things. And on this occasion king Solomon and the congregation of Israel sacrificed sheep and oxen in such numbers, that it is said, they "could not be told nor numbered for multitude;" meaning, by these words, not that they might not have been counted, but that it would have cost some labor to have reckoned them up, and that they were a very large number indeed. This was a way of expressing themselves quite common among the Jews.

The ark was put into that part of the temple called the oracle, the holy of holies, and the most holy place, where none but the high priest might enter, and he but once a year and it was covered over by the spread wings of the cherubin.

As soon as the priests had settled the ark, and come out of the most holv place, the Levites, who were singers, arrayed in fine linen and with musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burntoffering; and one hundred and twenty priests, blowing their trumpets, praised the Lord, together with the singers. Trumpets, cymbals, psalteries, and harps, were sounded in sweet and grand accord, and the singers sung in loud chorus, "Praise ye the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever!" Oh, how delightful it must have been to have seen these sights, and heard these sounds! God was pleased with the people's praises, for now "the cloud filled the house of the Lord"—that token of the Divine presence which Israel so often saw in the days of Moses. And "the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." More particulars of this interesting event may be found in the fifth chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles. let it turn our thoughts to reflect for a moment on that blessed state when all the saints that have ever lived shall unite together in praising God, and

when they shall see his glory forever and ever; well may it fill the hearts of those who serve God here with the most lively hopes and the most cheerful joy.

When Solomon perceived that the glory of the Lord was present, beaming forth from out of the thick cloud in which it was veiled, he fell on his knees before the altar of burnt-offering, and before all the people; and he prayed a most devout and solemn prayer, spreading out his hands towards heaven, while all the people joined him with their minds, being in a standing posture. He earnestly thanked God for his mercies to his father David, and to himself, and then implored him to hear all the prayers that might be put up in that temple, in war, pestilence, famine, and all the variety of circumstances in which Israel might be placed: and having finished this beautiful prayer, as you find it in this chapter, he arose from his knees, and turning round to the congregation, blessed them all with a loud voice, and exhorted them to walk in God's ways, and keep his commandments.

Solomon having finished his prayer, now proceeded to offer sacrifice before the Lord; "and he offered unto the Lord two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep." This was a wonderful number to slay, but fourteen days were employed in this work, and it could, therefore, be easily done. God approved of what Solomon did, and showed that his prayer, as well as his offerings, were acceptable; for, in the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles, we read, that "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifices."

The king then offered burnt-offerings in other parts of the temple, and then he and all Israel feasted on those parts of the peace-offerings which were allowed by the law for their use.

After having thus spent "seven days and seven days, even fourteen days," as we read in the fifty-sixth verse—that is, seven days in dedicating the temple, and seven in feasting at the feast of tabernacles which followed—the people blessed the king, thanked God for all they had enjoyed, and returned home with cheerful hearts. So they lost nothing by serving God, nor shall we, if we really serve him with sincere hearts, and pure minds. In the history of the Jews connected with Solomon's reign, as in every other part of the history of that chosen people, we have the plain and unmistakable evidence that the service of God is the grandest, most profitable, most exalting and most beautiful; and that it alone carries with it all there is of peace, joy and hope in the world.

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### Solomon's New Cities and Merchant Ships.

#### 1 Kings ix.

AFTER the building of the temple, Solomon had another dream, in which God told him that he would establish his throne for himself and his children, if he faithfully continued to serve him; but if he and his people turned to idolatry, and so departed from his commandments, then Israel should no longer enjoy the land he had given them; and their beautiful temple should be destroyed in such a manner that all who saw its ruins should wonder, and ask, "Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land and this house?"

Solomon having had a great deal of gold as well as timber, from Hiram, king of Tyre, to build his houses, gave him, in payment for these, the taxes laid on twenty cities; some think, indeed, that he gave him the cities entirely, they being not cities of Israel, which he durst not give, but cities which had been conquered on the borders of Israel. Hiram seems not to have been satisfied with his present, and so Solomon taxed all Israel to pay his debts to Hiram, amounting to sixscore talents of gold, or about five million seven hundred thousand dollars, and to enable himself to build a number of fine cities; among these was "Tadmor, in the wilderness," known now by the name of Palmyra, the ruins of which, in part, remain, and still give an idea of Solomon's grandeur,—for a more splendid city the world never saw. As the labor of building was hard work, Solomon employed the people of the race of the old Canaanites, that yet remained in the land; and "all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites," whom the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy, were forced into bond-service. As they had no money to pay Solomon, he obliged them to give him their labor in building, as the Israelites were aforetime obliged to make bricks and build for the Egyptians.

Solomon continuing to worship God, went three times a year to the temple, and offered sacrifices at the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, never neglecting these grand occasions; but these were not all, for, as one diligently serving God, many other times of worship required his services.

Solomon had also the first navy that we read of, and in building and managing his ships he was obliged to have the aid of the Tyrians, as well

as in building the temple. And these ships, which were merchant-ships, were sent down the Red Sea, under the charge of Hiram's sailors, to fetch gold from a distant place, perhaps in India, then called Ophir; and Solo-



KING SOLOMON'S SHIPS.

mon's fleet brought him back "four hundred and twenty talents," which are reckoned equal to twenty million four hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The Queen of Sheba's Visit to Solomon.—Solomon's great Riches.

#### 1 Kings x.

Sabæa, the southern portion of Arabia, now called Yemen. Its inhabitants were descendants of Ishmael, or of Joktan, and spoke a language like Hebrew. The queen of Sheba, having heard the fame of Solomon's wisdom, was resolved to travel into his dominions to see him; and, according to a very common custom of the East, she prepared a number of difficult questions and riddles to put to Solomon, that she might find out whether he was so wise as report stated him to be.

"And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart,"—that is, she talked with him about everything

which she had borne in her memory for the occasion, and about which she wished to ask him.

"And Solomon told her all her questions; there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not." He found out all her riddles, and



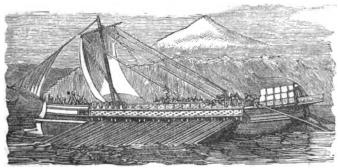
PART OF ANCIENT WAR-GALLEY.

if she asked him about things wonderful in nature, or difficult in religion, he answered all her questions with equal ease, for God had made him wise in all these things.

"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom," which she perceived by his answers, "and the house that he had built, there was no more spirit in her." She was so astonished that, for a time, she was unable to speak. At last she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice."

The queen now, according to the custom of the East, offered this great man her presents; and she, as well as Solomon, must have been very rich, for she gave him as much gold as we read, in the last chapter, of his receiving from Hiram, "a hundred and twenty talents," or about five million seven hundred thousand dollars. This sum of itself was a noble present, but this was not all that she gave to Solomon; she also added "of spices a very great store, and precious stones"—diamonds, and other such rare articles dug out of the earth. So Solomon had now riches in abundance, for Hiram's ships brought him gold and precious stones, and a valuable wood called the almug tree, with which he "made pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also, and psalteries for singers." Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that there were as many as four hundred thousand musical instruments.

After the queen of Sheba had been so liberal, Solomon might very well afford to be liberal to her; and so we read, "King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." It is not proper with us for people to ask us to give them anything of value which they may fancy—to do so would be very rude; but in the East, especially among the rich, it is common; and, therefore, the queen might, with propriety, ask Solomon to give her many curious pieces of workmanship which she saw, and which would be highly valued by her, as his gift, and as made by his clever workmen under his direction. It seems, too, that the queen was not covetous nor unreasonable in her requests, for Solomon denied her nothing that she



WAR-GALLEY IN SOLOMON'S TIME.

asked, and then he added other things "of his royal bounty," or without asking. No doubt Solomon was liberal to her in return for her liberality to him, and sent her back well pleased with her visit.

This chapter closes by telling us more about Solomon's great wealth.

I do not like to end this story of Solomon's riches without reminding you that Jesus Christ has told us that while the queen of Sheba came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon, he is a greater person than Solomon, and far more wise and rich than he. He is so wise that no one ever failed that sincerely looked to him in prayer, to show him the way to heaven; and so rich that he can enrich our lives with peace and happiness here, and an inheritance of bliss in the world to come, which are better than all the gold and silver, and other treasures, which Solomon ever possessed.

### Solomon's Disobedience to God.

### 1 Kings xi.

XE have, in this chapter, a sad record of the fall of king Solomon, whose reign began with such promise of goodness, and prosperity founded on his obedience to God. The temple dedicated so solemnly to the service of God, and with such promises and pledges on Solomon's part that both he, and the nation, would consecrate themselves solely to the worship of Jehovah, now receives only a portion of the service due to God: the rest is divided among the false gods and idols of the heathen, whose high places and temples he rears over against the sanctuary of the Most High. What has led him to commit this great sin? How could a man, brought up in all the piety and devotion of David's household, taught by a holy prophet, giving the best evidence of the possession of a devout and humble spirit, and withal, a man of such vast and varied learning that he must have understood the folly and imposture of these heathen idols, how could he bring himself to such degradation as to worship and build altars and temples to Venus or Ashtaroth, and to Moloch? It was because, from motives of policy, he had married wives, the daughters of the kings of the heathen round about him, women who were idolaters, and whose importunities turned away his heart from the Lord, and led him into sin. There were very many of these wives and concubines, though perhaps the seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines spoken of in this chapter, may be only a round or indefinite number put for a definite one which was smaller. The Jews were in the habit of speaking in this way, and we do so ourselves very often, as when we say, "I have called a hundred times," meaning that we have called a great many times, though perhaps much less than a hundred. A passage in Solomon's Song, vi. 8, is thought to refer to these queens

and concubines. "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number." The virgins are those who were reserved for admission into the harem, if the king was pleased with their appearance.

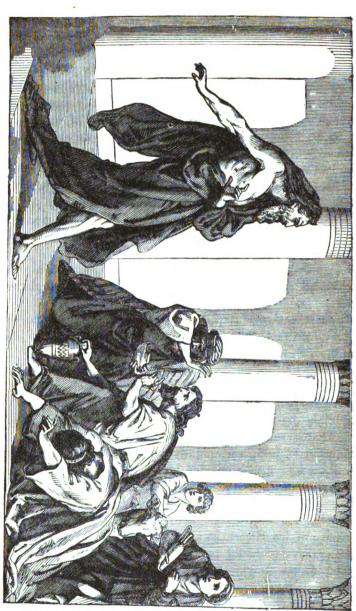
And here we read that "the Lord was angry with Solomon." I have told you, more than once, I believe, that God is not angry like us, but, when he sees sin, he marks it, and—if not repented of most sincerely, and pardon asked through Jesus Christ—he will not fail to punish it; and this is what is meant by his being angry, because he does what we should if we were angry with a person who grievously offended us. So God told Solomon that, as he had not kept his statutes or commands, he would rend the kingdom from his family; and his son and heir to his kingdom, whose mother was a wicked Ammonitess, should not reign in peace, but one, who was then his servant, should take away the greater part of his dominions, and rule over them. Jerusalem should, however, be spared for David's sake, and for the sake of the temple there.

Yet, though Solomon did not then lose his kingdom, he lost his peace. His sin, like all sin, was as a thorn in his side, and brought evil upon him.

There were two powerful princes who hated Solomon, but God had hitherto prevented them from hurting or troubling him; now, however, he prevented them no longer, and this is what is meant, when it is here said, "the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad, the Edomite;" and God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah."

You recollect that Solomon was told that, for his sins against God, his son should lose the kingdom, and it should be given to one of Solomon's servants. That servant was named Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He had the good quality of being very industrious and minding his business; and Solomon, like a wise man, employed him, rather than an idle person, and made him a ruler of the charge, or taxes, of the house of Joseph, so that he collected the king's taxes from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh—for these were what was called the house of Joseph. "And as he was going to take possession of his government, he was told by the prophet Ahijah, in God's name, that he should be king." Prophets spoke by remarkable signs: "And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him and rent it in twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." Then he repeated what God had before said to Solomon; and he added that, if Jeroboam





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would walk in God's ways, God would never forsake him and his family, for it was for sin that David's family was forsaken, yet he would in time restore it, and not punish it forever.

News of Jeroboam's being thus elected king of the ten tribes came to Solomon's ears, and he was very angry. "Solomon sought, therefore, to kill Jeroboam;" as if he could prevent what God had purposed; this was a sign that Solomon had lost his wisdom owing to his sin, or he would not have thought and done so foolishly. "And Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

Solomon now died, after a reign of forty years, and his son Rehoboam reigned in his stead.

There were other things which Solomon did, and which were written in a book kept in his time, and called "the Book of the Acts of Solomon;" that is, the book of what Solomon did; but that book was not a divine book, and so it has long since been lost.

Many persons think that Solomon repented of his sins before he died, and that God pardoned him as a sincere penitent; and they suppose this from what he has written in the book of Ecclesiastes. We hope it was so, but the Bible is silent about it, and for this reason—to teach us to take care how we sin against God. Sin is a dreadful thing; we are not quite sure but that it ruined Solomon, and we must take great care, and pray often and earnestly to God that he would keep us from practising it, and that it may not ruin us.

### Jeroboam chosen King of the Ten Tribes, and Rehoboam King of Judah.

#### 1 Kings xii.

AS soon as Solomon was dead, "all Israel" assembled at Shechem, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, of which Jeroboam was; under pretence of owning Rehoboam as their king, but they designed only to seek occasion to quarrel with him.

So they sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt, where he had fled out of the way' of Solomon, and they made him their head to begin a rebellion.

And they began to complain that Solomon had used them ill, and laid heavy taxes upon them—though they never had a more peaceable and prosperous king; and they promised Rehoboam that, if he would use them better, he should be their king.



Rehoboam asked for three days to consider what he should do. Rehoboam now called together the old and wise men who assisted Solomon in managing his kingdom, and asked their advice what he should do. And they told him that, if he would agree to be the servant of the people, and seek their welfare, as a faithful steward appointed to rule their affairs, then they would be sure to attach themselves to him most loyally as long as he lived.

This was good advice, but he did not like it, and was too proud to submit to it; and so he called his young men together, and they advised him to act in direct opposition to the opinion of the old men.

So Rehoboam spoke roughly to the people, as the young men advised him, and he said, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." This was not speaking with respect of his father, as he ought to have done.

If the people were not fond of Rehoboam before, this was enough to make them dislike him still more, and so they cried out, "What portion have we in David?"—that is, the house of David does not belong to us—our tribes have no need to care for a king of that family; "neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse," another name by which they meant David—"now see to thine own house, David"—or, thou son or grandson of David, take care of thyself, and of thine own tribe. "So Israel departed unto their tents"—they went home to their dwellings, and would not choose Rehoboam to be their king.

So Rehoboam had only Judah to reign over, and part of the tribe of Benjamin, and such of the children of Israel as dwelt in the cities of Judah and did not like to go and live in other parts of the land. From this time, then, we shall read of TWO KINGS where one only used to reign—the kings of Judah and Israel; the tribes of Israel, with their lands, being divided between them.

Rehoboam was much mortified to lose so large a portion of the people, and, to show his authority, he sent to demand taxes of them; but the angry people would not pay him taxes and acknowledge him as king, and in their fury they fell upon the unfortunate Adoram, the tax-gatherer, and pelted him with stones till he died. Rehoboam, on learning this, gave up all hopes of success unless by force, and, lest he should be killed as Adoram was, he "made speed to get him up in his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem."

And all the people of Israel who lived in distant parts of the country, being told that Jeroboam was returned from Egypt, assembled and appointed him king over all Israel; "there was none that followed the house of David," except—as mentioned before—some of the tribe of Benjamin, and a few straggling persons of other tribes, "but the tribe of Judah only."



ANCIENT SHECHEM.

When Rehoboam got to Jerusalem, which was thirty miles from Shechem, he assembled all the men fit for war, and was about to march with an army of a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, to fight against Israel. Had he marched directly with these, Jeroboam must have been beaten, for he had no such forces ready; but God had designed that this proud young man should be humbled, and that his word by his prophet should not fail; and so Shemaiah, a "man of God," or prophet, was now sent to forbid Rehoboam's fighting, and to warn the people not to go against Israel; and, therefore, they did not go.

Jeroboam now began to build and repair some of his cities; and, fearing that if his people should go up to Jerusalem to worship—as the tribes had hitherto done at the command of God—they might forsake his authority,

he thought of a scheme to keep them quite separate from Judah. Assisted by some wicked counsellors, he made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem," which was a great way off: "behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan." And he made a house of high places, or a temple, at Dan, and also he made idolatrous priests, and ordained a religious service and offered upon an altar that he built, and burnt incense. In all this he did wickedly, and displeased God, who punished him for his great sin, as we shall learn in reading the next chapter.

### Jeroboam's Hand withered.—The disobedient Prophet.

#### 1 Kings xiii.

WHILE Jeroboam was standing at his idolatrous altar, and offering incense displeasing to God, God sent a prophet out of Judah to reprove him for his sin, and to foretell the destruction of his wicked race of priests and the ruin of his altars. "And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." The altar could not hear what he said, but this was the way in which he was to reprove the king and his priests and people, and pronounce the end of this wickedness. You will, by-and-by, read about Josiah, a prince of that house of David which Jeroboam now despised, and how he did what the prophet here said he should do; and yet this did not happen till three hundred and sixty-six years after the prophet had prophesied.

That the king might not have any reason to doubt the prophet's word, he showed him a sign that God had sent him. "Behold," said he, "the altar shall be rent, and the ashes shall be poured out."

Jeroboam, who felt that he was reproved and not the senseless altar, being full of rage, stretched out his hand and cried, "Lay hold on him." "And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

Jeroboam was frightened when his hand dried up and became shrivelled, and then he remembered that his calves could not restore his hand, and he begged the prophet to entreat the Lord his God that his hand might be cured. And the prophet forgave his bitter enemy when he showed signs of sorrow,—as all good men should forgive,—and he prayed to God, and God restored the king's hand.

Then Jeroboam, to show his gratitude, asked the prophet to go with him and take something to eat and refresh himself, for he must have been weary after a long journey. But God had forbidden the prophet to eat with any one at Bethel, to show how much he detested the ways of the wicked, and good people should not make them their companions. So he would not go with the king.

"Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel," one who had probably been trained up in one of Samuel's colleges; but he seems to have departed from God, or he would not have lived among bad people, or at least without reproving them for their idolatry. When this prophet was told by his sons of all that had happened at the altar, he was very anxious to see the prophet of Judah; who, by this time, was on his way home. So he got his ass saddled, and rode after him as fast as he could. And he found him faint and weary, sitting under an oak to screen him from the sun, and he asked him to go back with him and have something to eat. But the prophet of Judah would not go back, because God had told him not to eat at Bethel. The old prophet, however, invented a lie, and told him that an angel had commanded him from the Lord to bring him back.

No doubt he was glad to return, as he was weary and wanted some refreshment, but he too hastily believed the old prophet, and so disobeyed God. As God had told him what to do, he ought to have prayed to God that he might do what was right before he attempted to return; but he forgot this, and so you will see what happened for his disobedience.

While he and the old prophet were sitting at table, God spake by the old man, and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord," that is, not minded what God had spoken, as is plain from what follows, "and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which the Lord did say unto thee, Eat no bread and drink no water, thy carcass shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fathers;" that is, thou shalt die very soon, and shalt not be buried with thy relations. This

seems a very severe sentence, but it shows you and me how much God is displeased with sin.

The old prophet now lent the man of God his ass, and he rode towards home, but a lion met him by the way and slew him.

Now, this was not a mere common accident, for if so, the lion would have devoured the man, and have killed his ass as well as himself, and have attacked the passengers who saw the lion and the carcass; but when the beast had slain the prophet he was like a tame animal, and did no other harm. "And, behold, men passed by and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt."

The old prophet immediately went and took away the body, and mourned over it,—as well he might, for he had brought the prophet of Judah to this sad end,—and then he buried him in his own sepulchre.

# The Sins of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, and the Afflictions of Israel and Judah.

#### 1 Kings xiv.

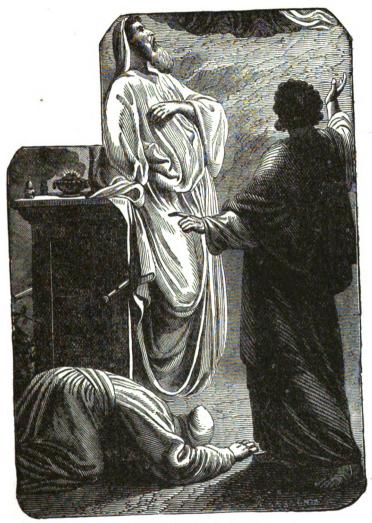
JEROBOAM had a son named Abijah, and now, as a punishment of Jeroboam's sin, God permitted some disease to fall upon him and threaten his life.

The king then told his wife to disguise herself, or dress in such way as that she might not be known, and to take a present with her, and go to Shiloh, to Ahijah the prophet,—who had told him that he should be king over Israel,—and the prophet would tell her whether the child would live or die. How silly men often are when they are wicked!—for if the prophet could tell what would happen to the child, surely he could tell who brought Abijah to him; so that it was a proof of great folly to tell his wife to try and deceive him.

Ahijah was now blind from age, but God told him that Jeroboam's wife was about to visit him, and for what purpose, and what he should say to her.

As soon as he heard the sound of her feet entering in at the door, he knew who she was, and he said, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another?—for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings." And then he told her to tell Jeroboam how God was displeased





THE KING ENTREATING THE PROPHET.

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with him for all his ingratitude after he had raised him to the throne of Israel; and for all the evil he had done in making other gods, and molten images; and that he would cut off all his heirs from the throne, so that none should remain,—just as men sweep away from their sight the last remains of filthy dung. "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city," said the prophet, "shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it;" meaning to say that none of them should be decently buried. One only should be honorably buried; the child Abijah should die, and all Israel should mourn for him as the heir to the throne, and God would take him away in love to him, because he should not live to suffer the disgrace which should fall upon the



SOLDIERS OF SHISHAE, KING OF EGYPT.

family of this wicked king—"because," said the prophet, "in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." See here how God loves good children and notices them, and if, like Abijah, they are taken out of this world when "some good thing" is in them, they have nothing to fear, for God will take them to himself.

Well, as soon as Jeroboam's wife got home, the child died, as the prophet had foretold, and all the rest of his words came to pass.

The length of Jeroboam's reign was twenty-two years, and Nadab his son

reigned in his stead. He lived longer than Rehoboam, as he reigned only seventeen years.

Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign over Judah: and as he reigned seventeen years, he was only fifty-eight years of age when he died. The same evils that were committed in Israel were also done in Judah—idols were worshipped, and all the sins which made God destroy Sodom were here practised. So God permitted Shishak, king of Egypt, to conquer Jerusalem, and he took away all the treasures which David and Solomon had laid up, and all the rich and beautiful shields of gold which Solomon had made, and Rehoboam was obliged to have shields of brass instead of them, to be carried before him when he went out in state.

Thus, on account of his sins, Rehoboam died disgraced by his foes. His whole life was a scene of trouble, as was Jeroboam's, for "there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days."

Rehoboam was buried in the city of David, and his son Abijam reigned in his stead.

# The Reigns of Abijam and Asa, Kings of Judah, and of Nadab and Baasha, Kings of Israel.

#### 1 Kings xv.

YOU remember that Rehoboam, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, who was made king over Israel, both began to reign at the same time; but Rehoboam reigned only seventeen years, while Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years—five years longer. During those five years, there were two other kings reigned over Judah—Abijam and Asa. Abijam, the son of Rehoboam, reigned three years only. He was as wicked as his father; yet, for David's sake, did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem—which means, that God did not extinguish his family, as we put out a light, but let the lamp continue to burn—that is, let the family still reign; for he set up his son after him to establish Jerusalem, where were his temple and altar. Abijam, like his father, continued to go to war with Jeroboam. Abijam was buried in the city of David, and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

"And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, reigned Asa over Judah." He drove the wicked out of the land, and removed the idols which his father had made. Nor did he pass by sin in his grandmother Maachah—for she was the mother of his father, Abijam, though he called her his mother, because she had, perhaps, brought him up as a mother. Maachah was fond of idols, and had set up one in a grove, which he broke to pieces and burnt; and he took away her royal dignity of queen, that all might see he was resolved to honor his God, and that he would not allow the great to set an evil example. And whatever spoils had been dedicated to God, with silver and gold vessels for the temple, he took care to place there.

It is pleasant, after reading about bad kings, to read of this good king; yet even he did what was not right, for he bribed Benhadad to break his promise of friendship with the king of Israel; and his bribes were taken out of the gold and silver that he had given for God's service in the temple.

Benhadad, in consequence, went and fought against Israel, and rescued Judah from their encroachments.

Asa, in his latter years, was diseased in his feet—some think he had the gout; he reigned forty-one years, and left his throne to Jehoshaphat his son.

Two kings in Israel who succeeded Jeroboam are also mentioned in this' "Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel, in the second year of Asa, king of Judah." He was a wicked king, and Baasha, a man of the tribe of Issachar, supposed to have been an officer in his army, conspired against him, and slew him. He was then besigging, or trying to take, Gibbethon, a city of the tribe of Dan, which the Philistines had obtained, and while he was engaged in warring, this man contrived to kill This was what the prophet Ahijah had said, as mentioned in the fourteenth chapter: "Moreover, the Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now"—meaning, when will it happen? Why now, very soon, "For it came to pass when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah, the Shilonite. Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord to anger." This cruelty of Baasha was to prevent any of Jeroboam's family from recovering the throne; but while he was guilty of these murders, God left him to be the executioner of a wicked family. Thus ended the reign of this Nadab, in two years. God sometimes spares sinners, but often "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

Baasha was at war with Asa, king of Judah, for many years. He reigned twenty-four years over Israel, and was as wicked as the family of Jeroboam which he had destroyed.

The History of more Kings of Israel.—The beginning of the Reign of Ahab.

#### 1 KINGS XVI.

WHEN Baasha died, his son Elah succeeded him; but he reigned only two years over Israel, for Zimri, one of his chief captains, killed him while he was getting drunk in the house of Arza, his steward, and so reigned in his stead.

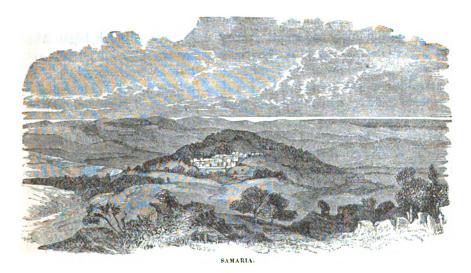


And Zimri, fearing lest any of Baasha's family should conspire against him, killed them also, as Jehu had foretold, and did just as Baasha had done to the family of Jeroboam. So here we see two entire wicked families destroyed for their sins. God would not have let the wicked usurpers seize the thrones, had they and their families loved and served him with all their hearts.

Zimri reigned only seven days, yet, during his short reign, he showed that he was as wicked as those whom God had before punished.

The army, being encamped before Gibbethon, and learning how Zimri had made himself king by killing his royal master, resolved that he should not long reign, and so they chose Omri, who also was a captain, and made him king that day in the camp. The army then left Gibbethon, and marched to Tirzah, where Zimri was, and besieged it, and took it. Zimri, seeing that he could not escape, ran to his palace, and set fire to it, and so perished in the flames.

Omri was not, however, at ease, though chosen by the army of Israel, for



a party rose up against him—perhaps some of the friends of Zimri—and they set up one "Tibni, the son of Ginath," as king; so that, for a long time, there were two kings in Israel fighting against each other, till, at last, Omri prevailed, and reigned over the whole kingdom.

The royal palace having been burnt at Tirzah, Omri built another city,

which became the royal residence, and this was afterwards famous in history. "He bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria." The price he gave for this ground was thirty-one hundred dollars of our money, which was a small sum; but it might have been sold cheap to please the king, as he wanted the hill for such a purpose.

Shechem was the first capital city of the kings of Israel, then Tirzah, and, from this time, Samaria. The city at last became so important, that the middle part of Canaan was called after it, and the inhabitants of the country between Galilee on the north, and Judah on the south, were called Samaritans.

Omri reigned twelve years. He was a very wicked man, and "did worse than all that were before him." He was buried in Samaria, and "Ahab his son reigned in his stead."

Good Asa was yet reigning over Judah, for remember, he reigned "forty and one years," and so he saw the end of all these wicked kings of Israel, who had such short reigns.

"And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, began Ahab, the son of Omri, to reign over Israel." Bad as Omri was, it is said Ahab "did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him." He married "Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians," or people of Zidon; she was a bad woman, and a great idolater, and, to please her, he worshipped her ugly idol, called Baal, which she had set up in Samaria, and he made the people worship it too. Indeed, Israel had now become so wicked, that in defiance of a curse which had been pronounced by Joshua when he destroyed Jericho—predicting the death of the eldest and the youngest sons of the man who should dare to rebuild it—one Hiel, of Bethel, was now actually bold enough to do so, and, as God threatened by Joshua, so it came to pass, for his two sons died. This happened five hundred years after the threatening was pronounced, and, most likely, this wicked offender laughed at it, and perhaps his sons joined in his wickedness, and so God punished them both. It is always dangerous to be careless about God's threatenings, and to laugh at anything that is wicked. proof is abundant and varied that God is quick to punish those who, in violation of his express authority, not only set at naught his purposes, but make a mock of him, with the miserable intention of gaining favor and applause from the wicked people of the world. How silly is such conduct!

# Elijah miraculously fed.—The Widow's Oil and Meal multiplied.—The Widow's Son raised to Life.

#### 1 Kings xvii.

OD was so displeased with Ahab and Israel for their sins that he sent a dreadful message to them by a prophet. The name of this prophet was Elijah, a Tishbite, or native of Tishbeh, a city beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. This was Elijah's message, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Now, you know, if there is neither dew nor rain, nothing will grow, and so there could be no harvest, and of course there must follow a dreadful famine.

As Ahab was a very wicked king, he would, no doubt, have killed Elijah, in his anger, for delivering such a message; but before he could scarcely recover from his astonishment, God ordered Elijah to escape, and hide himself by the brook Cherith, near Jordan. Here God had commanded ravens to feed him, "and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook."

After a while the brook dried up, as there had been no rain to fill it, and then God told the prophet to go to Zarephath, a town that was near Zidon, and a widow woman who lived there should feed him. When he got to the gate of the city, he found the woman gathering sticks, and he asked her for some water and a morsel of bread. She told him she had no bread, but only a little handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, or small cup; and she was getting sticks to dress this last portion of food to keep herself and her son alive. The prophet then told her to make him a cake first, and then she should make another for herself and son, for God would always provide meal in the barrel and oil in the cruse, till the famine should be over. The woman saw that this was a prophet, and so she obeyed him, "and she, and he, and her house, did cat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Elijah."

This woman did not lose by lodging the prophet; she got her provisions during the time of famine—but she got more reward still. By-and-by her son fell sick, and "there was no breath left in him," which means that he died. She then thought that God had sent the prophet to her house to

punish her for her sins,—for perhaps she had bowed to Baal, the false god, with the rest of the people, and now her conscience smote her, and she felt that she had done what was wrong. In her distress she complained angrily to the prophet, and he said nothing to her but "give me thy son." "And he took him out of her bosom," to which she fondly pressed him, like a tender mother, though he was dead,—and he "carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed." And then he prayed to God, "and he stretched himself upon the child three times," to warm his cold body, "and the soul of the child came into him" again, and Elijah took him and gave him to his mother.

She was delighted enough to see her son restored, and declared that it was, indeed, a proof that Elijah was a man of God, and that all he said, as a prophet, would come to pass.

### Baal's false Prophets exposed and slain by Elijah.

1 Kings xviii.

FTER Elijah had hid himself from Ahab for three years, God ordered him to go to him again. At this time "there was a sore" or afflictive "famine in Samaria," which was as bad for Israel as it would be for America, if all the people could get nothing to eat or drink in Pennsylvania.

Ahab had a chief steward of his palace, whose name was Obadiah. was a very good man, though employed by a wicked king; for bad people sometimes like to employ those that are good, as they can trust them better than they can those that are too much like themselves. This Obadiah had feared God from his youth, from the time when he was quite young; and we cannot fear God too soon, for, as a good writer says, "those that are good betimes are likely to be very good." Among other good things which he had done, he had hid a hundred of the persecuted prophets of the Lord in a cave; and when it was difficult to get anything to eat, he had managed to feed them with bread and water. These prophets had, no doubt, borne witness against the idolatry of Ahab; and his wicked wife, Jezebel, had caused many of their fellow-prophets to be slain. It was, therefore, very bold of Obadiah to try and save the rest; for, if his kindness towards them had been known, Jezebel would most likely have had him severely punished, or killed, as well as the rest. Obadiah had now been sent out by his master

to visit all the spots of land by the fountains and brooks, wherever it was likely that there was moisture enough to make some grass grow, and he himself went another way for the same purpose, so that something might be found for his horses and mules to eat.

In this journey Elijah met Obadiah, who knew him, and Elijah told Obadiah to let his master, Ahab, know he wanted to see him. Obadiah was, however, afraid that Elijah would be gone from the spot before he could find Ahab; and, as the king had sent everywhere to seek the prophet, and even made people swear that he was not in their country, should Elijah now cheat him, Ahab would be so enraged that Obadiah had not secured him, that he would kill him for being so disappointed. Elijah, however, faithfully promised to meet the king, and so Obadiah found Ahab, and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

And Ahab said to Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Now, it was not Elijah that troubled Israel, but God troubled Israel for their wickedness. But if Ahab meant to say—which perhaps he also did—that Elijah was the cause of Israel's being troubled, he only showed how apt wicked people are to try and put off the effects of their sin upon others, and to ascribe them to any but the real cause. Ahab was himself the cause of the famine, because he made Israel to sin, and this the prophet told him.

Then Elijah told the king to call a general assembly of all the false prophets of Baal, and of the groves, in number eight hundred and fifty, who were supported by the wicked Jezebel. The king, having his heart inclined to obey the prophet's order, called the false prophets together at Mount Carmel, four hundred and fifty of whom attended.

Now, as we cannot serve sin and serve God too, Elijah spoke to all the people, and asked them how long they would try to serve both God and Baal, and pretend to love God, while at the command of Jezebel they worshipped idols. And the people were ashamed to answer him, knowing how wickedly they had done. Elijah then told the prophets of Baal to get two bullocks; and to choose one for themselves, and to dress it,—that is, slay it, and cut it in pieces, and lay it upon a pile of wood, but without any fire; and to call upon their gods to send fire to consume it, and he would do the same; and then the God that consumed it should be the people's God; and the people agreed to this.

And the priests got everything ready, and they cried, "O Baal, hear us!" And they leaped upon the altar, and Elijah mocked them, and told them to cry louder, for their god was perhaps talking, or running, or travelling, or

sleeping. This was to show that their gods were not like the God of Israel, who can always see and hear, and is always present in every place, and knows all that we say or do, and can always listen to us when we pray. Well, Elijah gave them all day to try what they could do, for he knew they served a false god, and could do nothing by praying to him; but this would prove to Ahab and Israel, more than anything, how foolish and wicked it was to serve Baal. And the priests were almost driven mad with vexation, and they even "cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them;" but all in vain.

Elijah now called all the people around him. And he repaired God's altar, and he made a trench round it to hold water, and he put wood on the altar, and he cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood; and he ordered four barrels of water to be poured on the sacrifice and on the wood, and this he repeated three times, till the water ran round the altar, and the trench was filled. Then Elijah prayed to God, and God sent fire from heaven, and it burnt the sacrifice, and it dried up everything about it, even the water in the trench, as if it had been licked clean. It would have been wonderful if the fire had descended and consumed the wood even in a dry state, but it was more wonderful to see it doing so when everything was drenched with wet: "and when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God!"

Then Elijah, as God's prophet, ordered the people to take and slay all the prophets of Baal, as a punishment for their wickedness in misleading them, for they knew very well that Baal was no god; and also to prevent these wicked men from drawing them away from the true God any more. So they slew the false prophets at the brook Kishon, not because it was Elijah's order merely, but because Elijah was acting as God's servant, in executing this sentence: for in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, it was commanded that, if any false prophet led the people's hearts from the true God, he should surely be put to death, that they might put the evil away from the midst of them. In taking them to the brook Kishon to slay them, they would feel how richly they merited their punishment, when they beheld its channel dried up, as were all the waters of the land, as a part of the punishment which, owing to their idolatry, they had brought upon a whole nation, whom they had deluded.

After these false prophets were removed, and the people owned that the Lord was their God, God sent rain to cause the fruits of the earth to grow. Elijah saw that the rain was coming, and as Ahab had had nothing to eat

and drink during the day, having been at the sacrifice, Elijah told him to refresh himself. The prophet then went to the top of Mount Carmel, and

threw himself upon the earth, and he put his face between his knees, which was a posture in which he prayed, and humbly thanked God for honoring him before all Israel. Then he sent his servant to look towards the sea, and observe if any cloud appeared. And when there was none, he sent him again and again seven times, till, at last, he saw one which was about as big to his eye as the size of a man's hand. Then Elijah knew that the torrents of rain would speedily fall, and he urged Ahab to get into his chariot, and make all speed to get home, or he would be drenched with wet,for the chariots of those days were not close like ours, but open as our gigs, though shaped more like shells or boats. jah also paid all due respect to the king; and having "girded up his loins," or tucked up his long garments round his waist, he ran along before him, as one of his attendants, for sixteen miles, which was the distance between Carmel and Jezreel, the place where Jezebel was, and where her idolatry was practised in a high degree. Ahab might have asked the prophet to ride,



FIRE SENT DOWN UPON THE ALTAR OF ELIJAH.

instead of allowing him to be his servant; but if he did not know how to

respect the prophet, the prophet would not fail to show respect to him as his king. We must give honor to whom honor is due; for if bad men are raised in rank in the world, while we hate their wickedness, we must remember that it is God that raiseth up one, and putteth down another. Elijah's conduct explained what is meant by "Fear God, honor the king."

### Elijah's Flight from Jezebei.

1 Kings xix.

WHEN Ahab got home, he told Jezebel of all that Elijah had done, and when she heard that he had slain the false prophets, whom she protected, she swore by her gods that she would kill Elijah, and sent a messenger to tell him so.

As in her passion she had let Elijah know what she intended to do, he made his escape from her, and perhaps she was glad to get him out of the country. He did not stop in his flight till he had got quite out of the kingdom of Israel, and had reached Beer-sheba, in the kingdom of Judah, over which Jehoshaphat reigned; this place was eighty-four miles from Here, however, he feared that Jezebel in her rage might pursue him, as her husband Ahab, and Jehoshaphat, were on good terms, and so Jehoshaphat might not have quarrelled about pursuing a man into his territories. Elijah, therefore, travelled yet twenty miles farther, and reached the wilderness of Arabia or Paran, in which the children of Israel travelled for forty years. Here he sat himself down to rest under a juniper tree, and he begged of God to let him die, for he was not stronger than his fathers to endure so much fatigue and anxiety. But God had provided an angel to feed him, and he awoke him from a refreshing rest, and said, "Arise and And he looked, and behold there was a cake baken on the coals," or hot stones, after the custom of the East, "and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid himself down again." After he had slept again, the augel once more awoke him, and told him to take some more food; "and he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God." God made this food more nourishing than common food, and so it kept him alive and well for so long a time.

Horeb was the part of Sinai where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush; and here Elijah hid himself in a cave.

While he was in this place, God called to him in some way, so that he knew it was no human creature that spoke, and he said, "What dost thou here, Elijah?"—for Elijah did what was wrong in running away from lezreel. He ought to have continued to reprove Jezebel, and the rest of the



MOUNT HOREB, AND CAVE OF ELIJAH.

idolaters. He forgot that God had protected him against all the priests of Baal, who could easily have killed him with their knives and lancets with which they cut themselves; and he could as easily have protected him against the fury of Jezebel. Elijah answered the voice, and gave a sad account of Israel, that they had forsaken God's covenant and worshipped other gods; that they had thrown down God's altars, and so tried to make his true worship unknown in the land; that they had slain God's prophets, that there might be none to reprove their sinfulness; and that he was the only prophet remaining, whom they would kill also, if they could find him.

The voice then ordered Elijah to go upon the mount, where Moses had stood before him. And there was a great wind that split parts of the mountain, and an earthquake, and a fire, by lightning, and in other ways, as have been seen in earthquakes; but the Lord did not speak in the wind,

as he did, which we shall hereafter read, to his servant Job; nor did he speak in the earthquake and the fire, as he did to Moses; but Elijah heard "a still small voice." Then Elijah knew by its sound that it was nothing human, and he felt his soul and all around him to be very solemn. Under a sense of his own insignificance before God, he wrapped his mantle around his face as a sign of humility, for we hide our faces when we are ashamed—and he went and stood at the entrance of the cave. There God's voice spoke to him again, and told him to go to the wilderness of Damascus, and to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be a prophet; and that each of these should be employed in destroying the wicked and idolatrous people in Israel. The voice told him, however, that he was mistaken in supposing that he only was left to oppose Israel's idol, for there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed their hands to his honor, as though they had kissed the idol.

Elijah having left his hiding-place, met Elisha, who was busy in ploughing with twelve oxen, and he cast his mantle, or rather the skirts of it, over Elisha, which Elisha understood to mean that he was to go under his protection, and to have the same spirit of prophecy as himself. And Elisha begged leave to go home and kiss his father and mother, whom, as a good son, he loved and respected, and when he had told them where he was going he would follow Elijah. So he slew a yoke of oxen and dressed them with the wood of the plough, and invited his friends to his farewell feast, and then he followed Elijah and became his constant attendant as long as he lived.

# The War between Benhadad, King of Syria, and Ahab, King of Israel. 1 Kings xx.

WE now leave Elijah for a while, and have here the account of the war of Benhadad, king of Syria, against Ahab, king of Israel. Benhadad, under some pretence or other, marched with a large army against Ahab, and he had thirty-two kings, or princes, along with him, who had each brought troops to help him from their little governments.

The Syrian army, or at least a part of it, met the men of Israel, and the men of Israel "slew every one his man;" that is, they slew seven thousand two hundred and thirty-two men, as many as they themselves were. The Syrians were frightened at such a bold resistance, and turned their backs, and all the army ran away. "Israel pursued them," and Benhadad mounted

his horse and rode away as fast as he could, accompanied by his horsemen. And Ahab smote the Syrian cavalry, both those that rode on horses and those that rode in chariots; "and he slew the Syrians with great slaughter." The Jewish historians say that he plundered their camp, where he found a great deal of gold and silver, and that he took their chariots and horses. So Benhadad paid dearly for his insolence towards Israel.

When the battle was gained, the prophet told the king of Israel to be upon his guard, for Benhadad would return again "at the return of the year," when the fine spring weather again came round, and kings were used to go to war, and that he would bring another large army against him; and so it was.

The armies faced one another for seven days, and at last they fought, and the Israelites slew a hundred thousand of the Syrians, for God had given up these boasting idolaters to be punished for their bold wickedness. Twentyseven thousand yet remained, who took shelter in Aphek, but there the



SYRIAN WARRIORS

city wall fell upon them and they also were slain; either the Israelites dug under some parts of the wall, and so caused it to fall, or God sent a high wind, or an earthquake, and blew or shook it down.

Benhadad, who would have ruined Israel, was now ruined himself; and God often permits wicked people to suffer from their own doings, and the mischief they intended for others falls upon themselves.

Naboth robbed of his Vineyard, and murdered by Ahab and Jezebel.

#### 1 Kings xxi.

A HAB had saved all his dignity and wealth, and even got more by the spoils taken from the king of Syria; but no sooner was he freed from the troubles of war than his mind became dissatisfied, because he could not get possession of a small piece of ground near his palace in Jezreel, which was a vineyard of Naboth, and which he thought would make a nice kitchen-garden. He did, indeed, offer Naboth the choice of a better vineyard for it, or its value in money, but Naboth refused, because the people of Israel were commanded, by God's law, not to sell their lands from their family, or tribe, except in cases of great poverty—and Naboth was not a poor man—and, even then, the sale was not to be for more than forty-nine years at the most. (Lev. xxv. 23, 28.)

Ahab was very much vexed that he could not get the vineyard, and he went home and threw himself upon the bed, and would not eat; just like a poor peevish child that has been disappointed of some toy, or prevented in having some improper wish gratified.

Then Jezebel, his wife, asked the reason of his sadness, and he told her. "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?" said she; then "I will give thee the vineyard." Meaning that he had nothing to fear about any way in which he might get the vineyard, so as he got it.

So she contrived a wicked plan to ruin Naboth. She wrote letters, in Ahab's name, to all the chief rulers of Jezreel, and sealed them with the king's seal, which made them of the same consequence as if he had written them himself; and she told them to proclaim a fast, which was under a pretence that something evil existed in the land, for which they were to mourn; and when they were assembled, with Naboth amongst them, some men were to be ready who should swear that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king. Two witnesses would be enough by the law to prove him guilty, and then, by that law, he must instantly be stoned to death, and for his pretended words against the king his property would be forfeited to Ahab, and so he would not only get the vineyard, but all that he had.

Now, as Israel, and especially Jezreel, was in a very idolatrous state, it was easy to find bad rulers to obey these wicked commands of this most wicked queen; and two children of Belial—or worthless, lawless, abandoned creatures, which is what the name means—swore falsely against poor Naboth, who was instantly taken away and stoned to death.

As soon as the news reached the queen, she told the king, and he went directly to take possession of the vineyard. But though he had succeeded in his wickedness so far, God had looked at what was doing all the while, and he ordered Elijah to go and meet him in the vineyard. As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, he said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why, how did he know that he was his enemy? He might have been commanded to tell him something good. But Ahab's conscience told him he had done

wrong; and Elijah told him that God would punish him for this crime, and that the dogs should lick up his blood, as they had that of the innocent man whom he had caused to be killed. He also told him that all his family should be cut off like the families of Jeroboam and of Baasha, because he had been more wicked than even they were, and that "the dogs should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel," where she had been so cruel and so wicked.

Ahab was now alarmed, and rent his clothes, and clothed himself in sackcloth, and fasted, in token of grief and repentance, and walked softly about, pacing with slow steps, as one who was melancholy. And though he had been so wicked, God spared him all the evil that was to come upon his house; but it came to pass entirely in his son's days, who was nevertheless deserving of what he suffered for following all the wicked and idolatrous ways of his father.

### Ahab killed in Battle.

#### 1 Kings xxii.

AFTER Ahab made his covenant with Benhadad, they remained at peace for three years. It was probably agreed at that time that Ramoth-Gilead should be restored to Israel, but Benhadad had not kept his word. This made Ahab very angry. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, being on a visit to Ahab, Ahab asked him if he would join him in going to war with the king of Syria, in order to take this city, which, by agreement, belonged to him. Jehoshaphat agreed, and said, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses;" meaning that both he and all that he had were at his service for the purpose.

Jehoshaphat was, however, a very pious king, and he did not like to go to battle till he knew whether it was right; so he advised Ahab to ask counsel of God. Ahab directly called together four hundred of his false prophets, and asked them if he should do right in going to Ramoth-Gilead. And they, willing to please the king, who, as they knew, strongly wished it, said to him, "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

This was like the prophecies of false prophets, spoken in such a way that it was difficult to know whether the battle should be won or not, or which king should win it. However, it seemed to lean on the side of Ahab, and he liked the answer very well, and interpreted it as he wished it to be.

Jehoshaphat was not quite satisfied. He most likely knew that the

prophets which had been collected were not prophets of the Lord, and so he asked if there were no other prophets whose advice could be taken. And Ahab said there was another certainly, one Micaiah, but he hated him, for this prophet never prophesied anything good for him. (See 2 Chron. xviii. 7.) This was a prophet who had before reproved him for his sins, and wicked men do not like to be reproved for sin.

Ahab, at Jehoshaphat's wish, sent for Micaiah, who is thought at the time to have been in prison for his former boldness to the king of Israel. And now the two kings sat on thrones in great state near the gate of Samaria, and heard what all the prophets had to say. "And Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, made him horns of iron," in imitation of the manner of the true prophets, who prophesied by signs, and he told Ahab that he should



SYRIAN CAVALRY

push his enemies as with those horns till he had destroyed them. And all the prophets said, "Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand."

The messenger who fetched Micaiah told him what the false prophets said, and advised him to say the same. However,

Micaiah could only say what God impressed on his mind, and he would not deceive the king. Yet, as he knew that the king would only follow the advice of the false prophets, he repeated their words, "Go and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

The king saw that he did not speak the words of God, but was only ridiculing him and his prophets, and he was angry, and desired him with authority to tell him the truth. Micaiah then did so, and told him that he saw all Israel scattered like sheep on the hills, that have no shepherd to lead them. Though Ahab had desired him to speak nothing but the truth, and was angry when he spoke the exact words of the false prophets, he was now angry that he had prophesied evil things; for he saw that the scattered sheep meant that Israel were to be defeated, and that their being without a shepherd meant that he, Ahab, was to be slain. And he turned to Jehosh-

aphat, and told him he expected some ill-natured prophecy from Micaiah. Then Micaiah spoke a parable, and told him he saw a council in heaven. And the Lord asked his angels who should go and deceive Ahab, that he might fall at Ramoth-Gilead. And after different opinions had been given, a spirit came and said, I will go, and I will be a lying spirit speaking by Ahab's prophets. Micaiah told him, moreover, that God had allowed these wicked prophets to deceive him.

Then Zedekiah smote him on the cheek, and insulted him on his prophesying; and the king ordered him to be sent back to prison, and to be kept on bread and water till he returned. Micaiah again warned him, and told him if he returned safe, then God had not spoken by him.

Being hastily bent on having his own way, Ahab went to battle, and Jehoshaphat went with him. However, he seems to have had some fears lest what Micaiah said might come true, and so he disguised himself and advised Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes. In giving this advice, he appeared to do honor to Jehoshaphat, but, in reality, he was treacherous to him, and put him into the danger which he feared himself, hoping that, if a king was to be killed, Jehoshaphat, having a royal dress, would be sure to be marked instead of himself.

The king of Syria gave particular orders to his people to look for the king of Israel, and to fight with him, for he thought that if he were either killed or taken prisoner, the whole army would be thrown into confusion. As he was disguised, they mistook Jehoshaphat for him, and had nearly killed him, till he cried out, and they found that he was the king of Judah, and not the king of Israel. It was strange that they neither attempted to kill nor take him, though he was fighting against them, but "turned back from pursuing him." You see how dangerous a thing it is to be in bad company. The pious Jehoshaphat had nearly been slain by being mistaken for the wicked Ahab. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

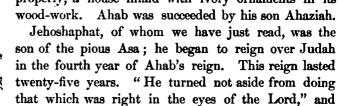
With all his cunning and caution, Ahab could not escape. Benhadad's captains and soldiers could not indeed discover him in his disguise, but God permitted an arrow that was not shot at him in particular, to give him a mortal wound. This was the more remarkable, as the arrow was not only not aimed at him any more than at any other soldier, but he being covered all over with armor, or, as we say, quite cased in it, there were but two or three places where he could be hit to be mortally wounded; and just in one of those places the arrow entered. "A certain man drew a bow at a

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venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness," or one of the places where a piece of the metal armor fitted with another piece.

Finding himself wounded, Ahab desired the driver of his war-chariot to take him out of the thickest of the battle-most likely that he might have his wound dressed—and then, being propped up, he continued some time longer on the field, while both sides fought furiously. By the evening he died, "and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot." The army were ordered to withdraw from the field, and they all marched home, and, as it had been a severe battle, the Syrians did not pursue them. Ahab was buried in Samaria. And now what was threatened by the prophet took place; he had said, "Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." "And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria: and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the Lord, which he spake."

Nothing more is said of Ahab, than that he built an ivory house; or, more properly, a house inlaid with ivory ornaments in its



son of the pious Asa; he began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab's reign. This reign lasted twenty-five years. "He turned not aside from doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord," and he turned many of the wicked people out of the land.

Jehoshaphat did wrong in joining with the wicked Ahab in battle, and we see he suffered for it; he also

did wrong in joining Ahaziah, his wicked son, in making a fleet to fetch gold from Ophir, for the fleet was wrecked; he, however, refused a second time to have anything to do with Ahaziah, and would not let any of Ahaziah's seamen go with his in a new fleet which he seems to have built. When we see plainly that we have done what is displeasing to God, we can never act more wisely than Jehoshaphat did in not doing it again. We should always avoid forming any sort of alliance with the wicked; it will be sure to do us some harm. And we should remember, too, that wicked men are very ready and quick to secure the favor and friendship of the righteous, when they can use the influence of such to the accomplishment of their own private purposes. It becomes, under these facts, then, every well and justly-inclined person to use the greatest caution in receiving proofs of friendship from those who may be regarded as the friends and allies of Satan, and to consider as insincere all their advances in that direction. The same pliant spirit which betrays some pious people into friendship with the enemies of religion also allows, or winks at, the peculiar and dangerous influences necessarily consequent upon such relationship. Little, but wicked, concessions are continually made, and often yielded to; conversations and acts, such as are against the teachings of truth, are enforced and gradually entered upon; and finally, through fear of ridicule or censure, the man whose heart was filled with good thoughts and influences is apt to be ready to conceal his dependence upon God and his attachment to his cause.

Ahaziah began to reign over Israel when Jehoshaphat had reigned nearly seventeen years over Judah. His reign was very short, being only two years. He was as wicked as his father, though he saw to what his wickedness had brought him, in disobeying God's voice by his prophet; and he walked in his father's ways, and in those of his wicked mother, Jezebel, and worshipped the idol, Baal, and so provoked God. We shall read his sad end in the next Book of Kings.



TVORY ORNAMENT.



IVORY ORNAMENT.

# SECOND BOOK OF KINGS:

On the "Second Book of the History of the Kings of Judah and Israel," continues the narrations of the First Book through the long period of three hundred years, ending with the terrible overthrow of Jerusalem and its splendid temple by the great Babylonish King Nebuchadnezzar, about five hundred and eighty-eight years before the birth of Christ, our Lord. It furnishes twenty-five chapters, full of wonderful miracles and highly entertaining events.

Sickness and Death of Ahaziah, and Destruction of a Hundred of his Soldiers by Fire from Heaven.

2 Kings i.

HAZIAH succeeded his father Ahab, as king over Israel, and, like his father, he was a very wicked man. It appears that his reign was disturbed, and that Moab rebelled against him—that is, refused to pay a tribute which had been paid from the times of David, when "the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts."

Most likely, while he was so troubled by the Mosbites, a yet greater trouble came upon him, for he "fell down through a lattice in his upper

chamber, that was in Samaria, and was sick."

Now we may see what kind of a man he was, for, instead of asking God to cure him, or to bless the means used for his cure, "He sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the God of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease." But who was this Baal-zebub? An idol worshipped by the wicked Philistines, who lived in Ekron, a part of the country belonging to that people. This was so detestable an idol, that, in the New Testament, his name is given to Satan himself.

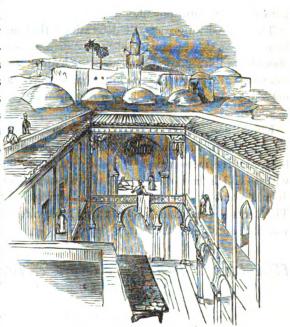
While the king's messengers were going to Ekron, God sent an angel to Elijah, the prophet, to tell him to go and meet them; and to ask them whether it was because there was no God of whom they could inquire in

Israel, that they were going to Ekron. Elijah also told them, in a particular manner belonging to the prophets, addressing the king as though he were there, "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." In the Eastern countries, the beds were placed in a sort of gallery, railed in, and so they were got into by steps; this explains the threat, "Thou shalt not come down."

The messengers quickly returned, and Ahaziah, wondering why they had come back so soon, said, "Why are ye now turned back?" Then they

told him what had passed between them and Elijah, but they did not know who Elijah was. However, they said, "he was a hairy man," - most likely wearing a garment made of camel's hair, as the prophets sometimes did; and that he was "girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." And, from his message, and their description of his dress, as Ahaziah had seen him before, in his father's court, he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

So the king sent a captain with fifty men to go after him, and seize him.



UPPER CHAMBERS IN ORIENTAL HOUSE.

When they came within call of him, he was sitting on the top of a hill, and they spoke in a ridiculing way to him, and sneered at him as a man of God. "Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down." This was not the way to speak to one of God's messengers, especially to a prophet like Elijah. So Elijah said words in reply, which meant as much as to say, "Well, since you ridicule me as God's prophet, you shall know whether I am or not, by fire coming down from heaven, and consuming you." Then fire

came from heaven—most likely a flash of lightning—and killed them all on the spot. Now, Elijah did not punish the men in anger because they had insulted him; indeed, he could not do it, God alone could send the fire; but he spoke as God's prophet, because they had insulted God, and, as God sent the lightning, it was he who punished the wicked soldiers as he threatened by his prophet.

Whether the king was impatient at the delay of the soldiers, and so sent others, or whether he was more enraged at Elijah for the lose of his men, and so resolved more firmly that he would have him, is not certain; however, he sent fifty more men, who behaved in the same way, and met with the same punishment.

The wicked king was still determined that he would take Elijah, and so he sent yet a third company of fifty soldiers to apprehend him. The captain obeyed the king's orders, and went to Elijah, and when he saw his hundred comrades all lying dead around him,—which he must have done,—he did not dare to mock, but he fell on his knees before Elijah, and entreated for mercy.

Elijah now, being ordered by an angel, went down to the king, and, as soon as he saw him, he repeated to him the word of God which he had sent before by the messengers. "So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead." This Jehoram was brother to Ahaziah, he having left no son to reign after him. There was also another Jehoram who afterwards reigned in Judah, and who was the son of Jehoshaphat.

Elijah taken to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire—Children who mocked Elisha killed by Bears.

#### 2 Kings II.

THE prophet Elijah had done much for the honor of God, and God has said, "Them that honor me, I will honor." "Enoch walked with God" by keeping in his ways, "and he was not, for God took him"—not as he takes us, by death, but he took him to heaven without dying. So God honored Elijah in the same way. But before he was to leave this world, Elijah visited the schools of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho. He would have had Elisha leave him, that he might ascend to heaven unperceived, not wishing to appear proud of the honor God was going to bestow upon him, for good men always abhor pride. Elisha, however, went with

him from place to place, where he was asked, by the other prophets, if he knew that Elijah was going to heaven that day; and he said he knew it.

After visiting Bethel and Jericho, they came to the river Jordan. Here fifty of the sons of the prophets, who had followed them six miles from Jericho, stood at a distance to see if they could behold Elijah's ascent into glory.

When Elijah and Elisha came to the water, Elijah folded up his robe and smote the stream, and the river divided, so that he and Elisha passed over on dry ground, just as the Israelites had done before.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." I cannot attempt to explain this, and so I have given the account exactly in the words of Scripture. Whatever this chariot was, looking like fire, it is evident that it did not burn or hurt the prophet—so that its bright appearance was only to show that Elijah was going in a glorious way to a glorious place.

Elisha saw this glorious ascent, and he cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" by which he is supposed to have meant that Elijah's counsels and prayers were as much defence to Israel as an army of war chariots and horsemen. When Elijah was gone he began to feel his loss, and he took his clothes, and, as a sign of grief for losing so great and good a prophet, he "rent them in two pieces."

The mantle of Elijah fell from him, and Elisha took it up, and, as Elijah had smitten Jordan and divided the waters with it, Elisha tried to do the same, and called out while he was trying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"—meaning, "Now let God divide these waters by me, his prophet, as he did by Elijah;"—for it was not the mantle nor the prophet that divided the waters, but God did so when the prophets looked to him to bless the sign they used. "And when he had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither." This miracle was seen by the sons of the prophets from Jericho, and when they saw that Elisha passed over dry land in the middle of the river, they knew that God had given him Elijah's power, and they met him and paid him reverence as a great prophet of God like Elijah.

Then the sons of the prophets wished much to go and seek for the body of Elijah, which they supposed might have been left on some high mountain while his spirit went up to glory. This was not unreasonable, for they knew that the body returned to dust, while the soul of the good man went

13 God, and therefore they wished to find Elijah's body and bury it with all possible respect. Elisha refused, at first, to let them go, but, at last, as they pressed him very much, he gave them leave. However, after searching three days, they could not find the body; and, indeed, how could they, for Elijah did not die like other men, but was taken at once, body and spirit, into glory.

Seeing that Elisha had now the spirit of Elijah, who had worked miracles, or done things which no skill of man can do, the sons of the prophets at Jericho complained that, though their city was very pleasant to look at, yet their water was very bad, and their ground brought nothing to perfection. This barrenness was, most likely, because Jericho had been built again, as we have before read, in spite of the curse pronounced against it by Joshua, the servant of God.

So Elisha took a cruse and put a little salt into it, and then went to the spring whence the waters flowed, and cast the salt into the spring, and told the sons of the prophets that the waters were now pure; and in future they need not fear to drink them, for they would not produce disease or death as bad water did; nor should they complain of their fruit failing, for these waters should now strengthen all the trees. "So the waters were healed." Salt, you know, will make water unpleasant to drink, but here it was the contrary, and this showed that it was a miracle, and that the prophet had a divine power to make salt produce sweet water.

Elisha went next to visit the sons of the prophets at Bethel. Before he reached the town it was known he was about to enter it, and some wicked children went out of the city to meet Elisha, and to laugh at him. Elisha seems to have had a bald head, and they thought this would do to laugh at, and so they cried, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head!" Some think that they meant to make fun of Elijah's going to heaven, and so they cried thus, signifying, "Go along with you, after your master Elijah. and don't come here, you bald-headed fellow."

Now, even if Elisha had not been a prophet of God, this behavior would have been very rude, and as wicked as it was rude.

Elisha gave them a look of rebuke, and then, as God's prophet, he "cursed them in the name of the Lord." This means, that he pronounced God's curse upon them, for it would have been wicked for him to have cursed them in the way in which bad men curse people, and which can only do harm to themselves. This was, therefore, not in rage and revenge, for Elisha would not then have acted like a good man. As soon as he had



GRILDREN-MOCKERS KILLED BY BEARS.

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spoken, "there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." Observe, these were she-bears, and probably had young ones, and so were more ferocious than he-bears.

After this the prophet returned to Samaria, the chief city of the kingdom of Israel, where there was much idolatry, and where he was to oppose the wickedness of the people.

Israel miraculously supplied with Water, and the Moabites defeated.

#### 2 KINGS III.

WE have before read that Jehoram, the brother of Ahaziah and son of Ahab, now sat on the throne of Israel. Jehoram was not a good man, but he was better than his father, as "he put away the image of Baal, that his father had made" for the people to worship, but he still worshipped calves as Jeroboam did.

Moab, you remember, was forced by David to pay taxes to Israel. When Ahaziah died, we told you that the Moabites had rebelled. Taxes were then often paid in cattle, which were valuable. "And Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheep-master," he kept a great number of sheep, "and rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool."

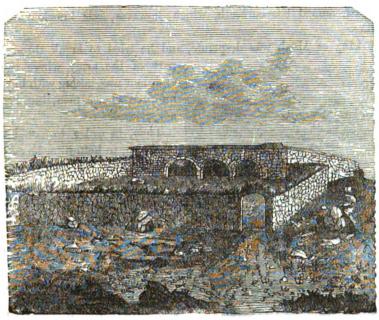
This tribute was thought by Jehoram to be too valuable to lose. So he numbered all his soldiers, to see how many he could raise against Moab. And he asked Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, if he would join him, and help him, which Jehoshaphat agreed to. Then they set off, and took the king of Edom also along with them. They had to travel seven days, and they could find no water, so that the army and cattle had nearly died of thirst, for want of wells.

The king of Israel was now very much frightened, and knew not what to do. The good king Jehoshaphat, however, helped him out of his difficulty, by asking if he had not a prophet of the Lord to direct him. Now, it so happened—or, rather God had so ordered it to save this army—that Elisha had followed the king, and one of the king's servants told him he was there; "Here," said he, "is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which youred water on the hands of Elijah"—meaning that he had been an attendant upon Elijah, and so poured water on his hands as those who waited on their superiors used to do. So the kings went to Elisha.

And Elisha spoke very roughly to the king of Israel, and told him that

if the good king Jehoshaphat had not been with him, he would have said nothing to him.

Then Elisha told the kings to employ the soldiers to dig ditches all about the valley where they were, and though they should hear no wind to bring clouds with it, and see no rain falling, yet the ditches should be all filled



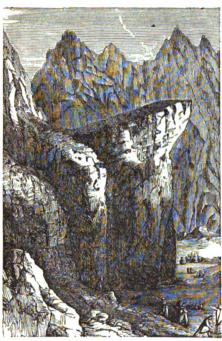
MOABITE SHEEP-FOLD.

with water, enough for the whole army and the beasts. Then he told them that God would defeat Moab, and they were to punish this wicked people, and destroy their cities, their trees, and their wells of water, and cover their land with stones, so that it could not be ploughed for anything to grow upon it.

The Moabites now gathered a large army, and stood on the borders of their land to defend it; and, early in the morning, as they were watching the motions of the kings' armies, they saw the reflection of the sun upon the water in the ditches, and, as it looked very red, they mistook it for blood, and made sure that the kings had quarrelled, and that their armies had slain each other; so, without giving themselves time to think, they agreed to go directly and share the spoil.

Then they all hurried, in disorder, to the camp of Israel, when the Israelites fell upon them, and slew them, and pursued them to their own country. And they pulled down their cities; and they strewed stones, perhaps the stones of the houses, on the fields; which, being done by every man, soon covered them enough to spoil them for the plough; and they put dirt into the wells, and cut down the good trees, and left but one place untouched, named Kir-harasath, which, however, was knocked down by machines.

The king of Moab was desperate, and he tried to break through that



WILDERNESS OF MOAB.

part of the army where the king of Edom was, taking with him seven hundred choice men, but he could not succeed.

Then, in order to get his idol, Chemosh, to help him, he even took his own son, heir to his crown, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, foolishly supposing that his false god would then be pleased, and that he should be able to beat Israel, against whom he and his people were now in a great rage.

All the nations that have not served God have been very cruel, and they have offered up human creatures, that is, killed them on their altars, that their blood might be the means, as they fancied, of getting pardon for the sins that they knew they had done, and of bringing blessings upon them. The

people called Ethiopians, or Africans, used to sacrifice boys to the sun, and girls to the moon, and they now often kill great numbers of innocent men for sacrifice. The Scythians, or old Russians, used to sacrifice every hundredth man of their prisoners taken in war, as a sign of thanks to their gods. The Egyptians killed red-haired men as an acceptable sacrifice to one of their gods: and they used often to sacrifice a beautiful young female to their river Nile, as a sign of gratitude to the river for watering their

lands; they dressed her up very richly, and then flung her into the stream, where she was drowned, or, more likely, devoured by that horrible creature, The Persians used to bury people alive in honor of their the crocodile. The Gallic Druids—a set of priests who lived a very long time ago in France—used to set up an immense and tall figure of a man, made of wicker-work, and twisted it round about as many as a hundred human victims, and then consumed the whole as an offering to their gods. the Druids, who lived at that time in England, more especially in the Isle of Anglesea, used constantly to sacrifice the prisoners they took in war. The Athenians used to sacrifice a man every year, after having first loaded him with curses, that, as they supposed, the wrath of God might fall upon his head, and so take it away from them. The Carthaginians, a people who lived in Africa, were even known to have offered two hundred victims at one time; and so cruel were they in their sacrifices, that it was usual for the father to slaughter the most beautiful of his children, or those he loved best, because he thought that sacrifice would best please his cruel god. The Danes, on one occasion, sacrificed ninety-nine slaves. Two hundred children were sacrificed at once, in Peru, for the health of one great person, which, it was fancied, would be gained by the wicked act; and the Mexicans used to have thousands of victims. Only a few years ago, the South Sea Islanders used to sacrifice men, but the preaching of the Gospel by the missionaries has caused them to throw away their wooden gods, and to destroy their bloody altars. But, to this day, some African nations kill their prisoners; some people, in the East Indies, fatten human victims for slaughter; and some even eat their criminals and prisoners of war as a religious act. This is done in New Zealand. Had you been born among some of these people, you might have been butchered in your childhood, or in your youth, or left to suffer all these cruelties as a man or woman.

## Various Miracles by Elisha.

#### 2 KINGS IV.

ELISHA had a double portion of Elijah's spirit; and the power God gave him of working miracles was often used by him to do good to those who were in trouble.

A poor widow of one of the sons of the prophets had been left by her husband, not only without money, but in debt. Now when people owed

money, at that time, they were not only obliged to give up what they had to pay it, but even their children to be sold for slaves. This poor widow had two sons, and the creditor, or person to whom she owed money, as she had nothing left to pay, came to her and demanded her sons. The poor widow loved them too well to part with them; but what could she do, as she could not pay the debt? In her distress she thought on Elisha, and ran to him with her tale. Elisha kindly said, "What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" The poor woman had only a pot of oil, and that would not pay the bill. Elisha then told her to go and borrow ever so many empty vessels—pots, or anything else she could find —and to shut herself up with her two sons, and keep pouring the oil she had as long as it would run, and she would find all the vessels full. And when she had filled them, he told her to go and sell the oil, and pay her debt, and she would then have oil left for herself and sons to live upon, as oil was, and still is, an important article of food in that part of the world.

In his journeys to visit the schools of the prophets, Elisha often passed through a place called Shunem. After the hospitable manner of the country a rich lady, who lived there, seeing him in want of refreshment and rest, invited him to her house, and, having received a hearty invitation to look in whenever he passed that way, he often called upon her. She soon found out that he was a prophet, and saw that he was a good prophet. She, therefore, begged her husband to build him a little chamber for his own use, where he might be undisturbed by the family when he passed that way; and she would have it furnished with a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, so as to make it quite comfortable for him. And the chamber was built and furnished, and Elisha, and his servant, Gehazi, used to lodge there.

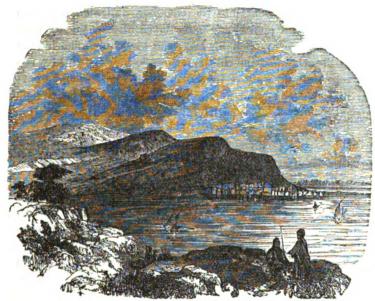
Elisha was very grateful for this kindness, as we ought always to be for any kindness shown to us. And he desired his servant to ask if he could do anything to serve the family, and procure any place of honor and profit from the king for the kind lady's husband.

Gehazi, however, thought that if God gave her a son in her old age, who should inherit her property, she would be glad; and, as from that son might spring the Messiah—the divine Saviour—which every Israelite hoped would spring from his family, such a blessing would be valued. So, no doubt, the prophet prayed to God, and God sent her a son.

When this little boy had grown up sufficiently to go to his father into the fields, he was out, one harvest day, among the reapers, when he was taken

very ill, and he ran to his father, and cried, "My head, my head!" His father ordered a lad to carry him directly to his mother. She fondly took him up on her knees and tried to comfort him; but he had not been long there before he died.

When this Shunammite lost her son, she laid him on the prophet's bed, and had her beast saddled, and rode in haste to his dwelling, at Mount



MOUNT CARMEL, THE RESIDENCE OF ELISHA.

Carmel. Elisha saw her as she was coming, and sent Gehazi to ask her if anything was the matter, and she answered, "It is well." You must not suppose that this was an untruth, for, as she was a pious woman, she was sure that whatever happened to her it was well, and that God would make it to turn out so at last.

However, when she got to the man of God, she told him all that had happened to her; but she was too much grieved to speak at first, and only fell at his feet and clung to his knees. Gehazi would have taken her away, but Elisha desired him to let her alone, for he saw that she was grieved. The Shunammite then gave him to understand that her child was dead. Elisha instantly desired Gehazi to take his walking-staff, and to bind up his 'ong garments round his waist, and set off to the dead child, and to make

all the haste he could; so that if he met any persons he knew, he was not even to waste an instant in speaking to them; and, when he should reach the Shunammite's house, he told him he must lay his staff on the face of the But the Shunammite was not satisfied that the servant went alone, and earnestly begged of the prophet that he would go with her. then kindly granted her request. In the meantime, Gehazi did as the prophet had told him; but the child did not recover. On arriving at the house, Elisha himself went into the chamber, and, shutting the door, he prayed, "and he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro, and went up and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." Elisha, having restored the boy, gave him to his mother, who fell at his feet to express her gratitude, as she had before done to express her grief; and she took up her child, and went out of the chamber with her heart thankful and glad.

We next find Elisha at Gilgal, when there happened to be "a dearth in the land," or a famine, owing to the dryness of the ground.

The sons of the prophets being assembled to receive his instructions, he ordered that some pottage, or broth, might be got ready for them to eat. And one went out to gather some herbs to put in the pottage; and, by mistake, he brought in a lap-full that were poisonous. After they were cut into the pottage, and boiled, he poured out for the young men to eat; but, as soon as they tasted it, they cried out that it was poisoned—"there is death in the pot"—if we eat any more we shall die.

Elisha then called for a little meal, and cast it into the pot, and the poisonous and bitter taste was gone; and they ate of the pottage, and it hurt none of them. Not that the meal made the pottage better, but God helped the prophet to work this miracle, to show, as he had shown before, that Elisha was a man of God: and so they had sign upon sign.

Elisha, also, did another miracle while he was teaching these sons of the prophets. He received a small present of twenty barley loaves and some ears of corn, which he desired should be given to the young men to eat. Now there were as many as a hundred there, and this would be nothing amongst them; and so his servant told him. However, he desired him to give them to the people; and they all ate and had plenty, and some was left. So God honored his prophet Elisha.

### Naaman, the Syrian Captain, cured of Leprosy by Elisha.

#### 2 Kings v.

THE chief commander of the Syrian army was a great officer, and was covered with honors on account of his victories; his name was Naaman. But this man, with all his greatness, had that terrible disease, the leprosy, so that, most probably, nobody liked to touch him, and, as an old bishop once said, "the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him."

There is no doubt but Naaman tried every possible way to get cured, but all help was in vain. However, God so permitted it, that one of the plundering parties of the Syrians had entered the territories of Israel, and had carried off a little girl as a prisoner, and she was obliged to be a slave to Naaman's wife, and to wait upon her. This little maid, though a slave, did not hate her master for buying her; but patiently submitted to the lot which God had appointed for her; she was more happy in her slavery than Naaman in all his greatness, for she was not a leper, while he was, and she knew the prophet of the true God, while he knew nothing about the God of Israel. Her heart was very kind, and when she saw her master suffering under his leprosy from day to day, and no one able to cure him, she said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy."

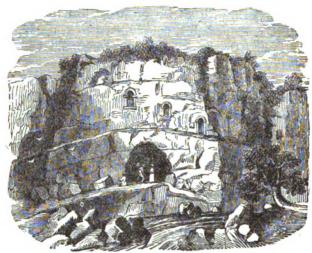
As soon as Naaman was told about what the little maid said, he told his royal master, who directly wrote a letter for him to the king of Israel, supposing that he could as well cure his general as the prophet could. Naaman now set off and took with him some presents of silver and gold, reckoned at least worth twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars of our money, and some suppose worth above seventy thousand dollars,—and also "ten changes of raiment," so that the present was in keeping with the high office of the Syrian, and was very great.

Naaman, on his arrival at the Israelitish court, presented his letter to the king, in which Naaman's master said he had sent his servant to him to cure him of his leprosy. When the king of Israel had read it, he burst into a great rage, and rent his clothes, as the Jews did when they heard or read anything that was blasphemous, and he asked, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?" He also thought the letter was meant to insult him, and to make a quarrel. Elisha, however, soon heard of what had happened, and

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he sent to the king, begging him to let Naaman go to him, and he should soon know there was a prophet in Israel that could cure him.

Then Naaman went in a very stately way to the dwelling of the prophet, "with his horses, and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." So Elisha sent out to him to tell him to go and wash seven



THE RIVER JORDAN, NEAR ITS SOURCE.

times in the river Jordan, and he would be well. When Naaman heard this he was extremely angry, for he thought the prophet would have waited upon him himself, and have waved his hand over his leprosy and called upon his God, and so have cured him. Besides, there were rivers in Syria far better, in his opinion, than the river Jordan. And he was going away quite disgusted when his servants respectfully told him that the remedy was very simple, and he might as well try it. So he was persuaded, and went and did as the prophet told him, and was cured.

Naaman was, nevertheless, grateful when he was cured, as we all should be for any kindness done to us,—for he returned to the prophet, told him that he was now sure that the God of Israel was the only God in the world, and begged him to accept of his presents. Elisha, however, refused everything, for he thought God would be more honored if the cure were wrought without pay.

Naaman now asked leave to take away a little of the earth of the land of Israel, that he might build an altar to the Lord with it, for he resolved in

future to worship no other God but the God of Israel. He could as well have built the altar of any other earth, but he now loved the very soil of the country in which he was cured, though he had before thought so meanly of its waters.

As Naaman resolved to worship God only, he did not know what he should do when he got back to his own country and attended his royal master in the house of Rimmon, the idol which he worshipped; and he hoped that, as his heart would no longer be engaged in the wicked service, God would pardon his attendance on his master. This was not right, for he ought rather to have lost his master's favor than to have so much as appeared to worship an idol; however, he had just begun to learn his religion, and so the prophet was not angry with him, but, in pity to him, told him to go home in peace.

Naaman had not gone far before he was overtaken by Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. This man thought within himself that his master might as well have taken some of the presents which he had refused; and, as he would not have them, he wished to get a share himself, which he supposed Naaman was now in a humor freely to give. But, as his master had refused, what story could he tell if he asked for the money?—why, he invented a lie. Naaman saw him running after him, and got out of his Then he told him that two young sons of the chariot to know the reason. prophets had just arrived, and he had come to ask for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for them. Naaman would make him take two talents worth about thirty-six hundred dollars, and two changes of garments, and he made his servants carry them for him. When they got to a tower which was at the entrance of Samaria, he stowed the articles away in a house and sent back the men. Now, he thought that all was snugly done, and that he might buy olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants with the money, and become quite great. But while he was dreaming in this foolish way, and flattered himself that the prophet knew nothing about what he had done, Elisha knew all about it; and when he went, as usual, to wait upon his master, Elisha asked him where he had been. He had told one lie, and, like wicked children who tell one lie, he had now another ready to try and cover the first, and he said, "Nowhere." "Why," said Elisha, "went not my heart with thee,"-that is, did I not know "when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" Is it a time to enrich thyself now, when a heathen has been brought to the knowledge of God, and wouldst thou gain by such an event as that? So he told the wicked man that he should have Naaman's leprosy as a punishment, "and he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow."

My dear young readers, we are all lepers, like Naaman, but not on our skins; our leprosy is worse, and lies in our hearts. It is the foul disease of sin that infects us. This makes us all as unclean before God as Naaman was before men. Who, then, can cure us? There is "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." What Jordan's waters did for Naaman's leprosy, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can do for our disease—it can cleanse us from all sin. But we must go, by faith, to the Saviour, we must seek him in prayer, and if we so seek him, not once, but seven times, or many times, if it be seventy times seven, God will take away the stains of sin from our souls, and we shall be made holy and unblamable before him, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

# An Axe made to swim.—The King of Syria's Secrets told by Elisha.— The Syrian Army smitten with Blindness.

2 Kings vi. 1-23.

ELISHA gave so many proofs that he was an extraordinary prophet, that large numbers of the sons of the prophets flocked to him for instruction, so that there was not room for them at Gilgal, where Elisha used to live. The young men, therefore, proposed to go to Jordan, which was about six miles off, and by every one cutting a beam from the trees which grew upon its banks, they thought they could soon build a new house large enough to hold them all. Elisha approved of the plan, and so they set off, and began to work. "But as one was felling a beam, the axe-head fell into the water; and he cried and said, Alas, master, for it was borrowed!" Elisha then asked him to show him the place where the axe was thrown in; and then he cut down a stick and threw it after it, and, lo, the iron swam; and he got his axe again. Now you know that iron will not swim, but sink; but this was a miracle, a thing done contrary to the usual order of things; and it was another proof, added to those before given, that Elisha was a man of God, one on whom he had bestowed extraordinary power.

Elisha's miracles were not yet done. The king of Syria raised an army against Israel, and advised with his counsellors about the best spots for fixing his camp, and making inroads upon the country, so as to plunder it.

However, every time he marched to any place, he found that the Israelites were aware of him. This made him suspect his people of treachery. At last, one of them, who had heard of Elisha's exploits, told him that he could easily make it out how Israel happened to know all that the king of Syria intended to do, for there was Elisha the prophet in Israel, who could let his king know all that passed, even in the king of Syria's bed-chamber.

The king of Syria then sent a large army to surround Dothan, where Elisha then was, and to take him prisoner. This was very foolish, for if Elisha was not the cause of his plans being found out, it was of no use; and if he was the cause, why then the prophet would as easily know that he intended to capture him, and so get out of his way.

One morning early, Elisha's servant being up, was astonished to find the city surrounded with Syrian soldiers. In his fright he ran to his master, and told him, and cried out, "Alas, my master!" for he thought they would certainly be taken or slain by such a great host. Elisha then prayed to God to open the eyes of the man's understanding, to see how well he was proteeted; and he saw a host of angels all around, looking like horses and chariots of fire. The Syrians then descended from a mountain, and approached the city, and Elisha prayed that God would smite them with blindness, or, at least, make their eyes so dim that they would be unable to distinguish any object clearly. God heard Elisha's prayer. Then the prophet went himself to the army, and told them that the prophet was not in the city, which was true, for he had now come out of it-and, if they wanted to know the way to the place where he was to be found, he would lead them So he led them to Samaria; and then he prayed again that God would open their eyes, and lo, they were in the midst of the capital of Samaria, surrounded by people and soldiers enough to cut them all to pieces. The king then asked the prophet if he might kill them, but the prophet would not let him, for he had only taken them there to show them how foolish they were: besides, it would have looked very treacherous, after he had promised to lead them; so he got them kindly treated, procured bread and water to refresh them, and then sent them away to their master, glad enough to escape.

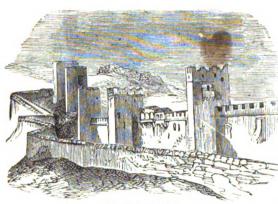
The wonderful power of God, shown in the acts of one of his prophets, is here placed in bold contrast with the weakness of a great army. There are other strong instances scattered through God's word; but, we think, in this one is set forth, in an unusually clear and strong light, the foolishness and ignorance of the natural mind when at enmity with God.

## Siege of Samaria.

2 Kings vi. 24-vii. 33.

THE Syrians seem to have had a great enmity to the Israelites, and we here find them suddenly surrounding Samaria, which had, perhaps, been short of provisions; and so laying siege to it to starve the people to surrender.

As the people of Samaria could not get out of the city to obtain provisions from the fields or other places, the famine was great among them; they even ate asses, whose flesh was reckoned unclean and not fit for man's food; and these creatures becoming scarce, so many having been killed, an ass's head, with the little meat it afforded, was at last sold for a large sum



WALLS OF SAMARIA.

of money. Some think the value of the Jewish pieces given for the ass's head was twelve dollars, others say twenty-five dollars, and others say it was as much as forty-five or fifty dollars. There was also a very poor sort of peas, called fitches, or lentiles, which somewhat resembled dove's dung, and a fourth part of a cab of these, which was about

half a pint, was sold for four dollars. A cab was a measure holding about a quart.

But there was still a worse proof of the distress of the people for food. The king was passing along the wall of the city, giving his orders for its defence, when a woman implored his help, considering herself as wronged by another woman. The case was this:—they had nothing to eat, and agreed by turns to kill their poor infants and eat them. So this woman killed hers, and it was eaten up; but when she asked the other woman to kill hers, she refused, and hid it, either wanting to keep it for herself, or shuddering at so cruel and wicked a deed. The king thought at first that the woman wanted food from him, and asked, "Whence shall

I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?"—meaning, that there was no corn in the barns, and no wine in the presses, and so she could have nothing. But when he heard what she had done, he rent his clothes in great agony; and when they were torn, the people saw that he was dressed underneath in sackcloth, or rough cloth, which was a sign of his distress for his people, and of his humiliation before God.

Then Elisha prophesied that on the next day, instead of famine, there should be such plenty that a measure of fine flour, holding more than a peck, should be sold for silver worth about fifty-eight cents, and double the quantity of barley for the same money. What a difference, when, the day before, half a pint of a miserable sort of pea had fetched at least four dollars!

The king heard this prophecy, and a nobleman on whose arm the king leaned would not believe it possible that such good news could be true. "Aye," said he, "if God should open windows in heaven"—meaning, if he should rain down the flour and barley, then we may have it. "Well," said Elisha, "it shall be as I have said; you shall just live long enough to know it, but not to partake of the plenty."

Now there happened to be four men who had the leprosy so very bad that they were not allowed to enter into the city; some think these were Gehazi, Elisha's wicked servant, on whom Naaman's leprosy rested, and Gehazi's sons. These lepers were starving, and they said, It is of no use to try to go into the city, for there we shall get no food, and if we stay here we shall die; so let us try if the Syrians will help us, for they have food enough, and if they kill us, why we shall but die at last.

The lepers then went to the camp of the Syrians, and it was in the dusk of the evening; but when they got there, how surprised were they to find that not a man remained! The fact was, that God had made the Syrians to fancy that they heard the noise of a very large army approaching them; supposing that the king of Israel had got some other kings to help him, and that they were marching suddenly upon them to cut them to pieces, they all fled for their lives and left everything they had behind them—tents, horses, asses, food, silver, gold, raiment; and, indeed, a vast treasure. The lepers now ate and drank plentifully, and then began to secure some of the treasure for themselves, and hid it. But they forgot for some time that, while they were enjoying themselves, their countrymen in Samaria were starving. So they said, "We do not well, we ought to tell the good news to the city, and if we do not, something bad may happen to us." So they

hastened to the sentinel who kept guard at the city gates, and the news was soon told to the king.

The king directly got up and consulted with his courtiers about what he should do. "This," said he, "is only a trick of the Syrians; they are not far off; they have, most likely, hid themselves somewhere in the fields close by, and when we go out they will fall upon us." Some of his counsellors then proposed to send out some horsemen to see if the Syrians were really gone, and their advice was taken. It was proposed to send out five horsemen, but there were only two horses remaining, and those chariot horses, used for drawing and not for riding; the rest were either in a starving state or eaten. Two horsemen, therefore, set off and went as far as Jordan, over which the Syrians had to pass, and they found they were gone and that all the road was strewed with garments and vessels, which, in their flight, they had thrown away, supposing the enemy was at their heels.

The messengers now returned and told the king, "and the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians;"—that is, they took for spoil all that the Syrians had left; and they had left so much food, which they had provided for their men, that "a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel," or fifty-eight cents, "and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord." So you see God's word came true which he spoke by Elisha.

But what became of the nobleman who would not believe it? Why the king gave him charge of the city gate to keep order, and prevent the rush of the people, eager to get food; and, in doing his duty, the crowd was so great, and in so much hurry, that he was pushed down and trampled to death. So he saw the quantities of food brought in by the people, but never tasted any himself, just as Elisha had told him.

### Benhadad, King of Syria, murdered by his Servant Hazael.

2 KINGS VIII. 7-15.

LISHA, in his journeys, went to Damascus, the chief city of Syria, and at that time Benhadad the king was sick. Like all sick people, he wished much to know if he should get well; and he sent Hazael, his chief captain, to inquire of the prophet. So Hazael went, and took with him a number of presents, according to the custom of the East, which is continued to this day. And he said to the prophet, "Thy son, Benhadad, king of

Syria, hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?"—not that Benhadad was the prophet's son, but it was a respectful way of speaking in use, when a prophet was addressed. Elisha told Hazael that his master might recover of his disease, but still he should die. And he looked at



SYRIAN TENTS.

Hazael till the officer was ashamed, or stared him out of countenance, as we say, as though he would search his very heart; and then "the man of God wept."

Hazael asked him why he wept. The prophet then told him that he foresaw he would do a great deal of harm to Israel; and he meant by this that he would have power in Syria, and would go to war with Israel. Then Hazael answered the prophet, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" By which some suppose he meant, "Do you suppose I could act so much like a brute?" Though others think, with some reason, that he rather meant, "What! shall such a man as I am, not of royal blood, be raised to power enough to do such things?" "Yes," said the prophet; "the Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

So Hazael went home, and he told the king that the prophet said he would recover; which was not true, for he had only said that he might recover of his disease, and yet he should die; but Hazael said nothing about that.

The next day Hazael took a wet cloth, and laid it on his master's face

under the pretence of cooling his fever, and Benhadad, being weak, could not throw it off, and so he was smothered. Some think Hazael did this on purpose, while others suppose that he did not mean to kill him, but, according to a custom of the East, he tried this means to do him good. It is, however, certain from what afterwards happened, that he was a very cruel, hard-hearted wretch, and was quite capable of murdering his master; of whose throne he got possession after he had killed him.

## Jehu anointed to be King of Israel.—Joram and Ahaziah slain.—Jezebel killed.

#### 2 Kings ix.

AT this time, Joram, or Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and brother of Ahaziah, still reigned in Israel; and Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, reigned in Judah. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He married Athaliah, the daughter of wicked Ahab, and was led into the practice of idolatry.

Edom had been obliged to pay taxes to Judah ever since the time of David, a space of one hundred and fifty years; but the people now rebelled, and elected a king of their own.

Joram, the son of Ahab, had now reigned twelve years, and Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram of Judah, reigned in Judah. He began to reign at twenty-two years of age, and reigned only one year; for "he went with Joram, the son of Ahab, to the war against Hazael, king of Syria, in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram:" and Ahaziah went to Jezreel, where he was lying sick, in order to comfort him.

At this time, Jehu was commander of the forces of Israel, and God. ordered Elisha to send a young prophet to him, and to pour oil on his head, and inform him that God had chosen him to be king over Israel, that he might cut off all the wicked house of Ahab, which, both in Judah and Israel, were now equally guilty of idolatry.

Some of the other captains had seen the young prophet come to Jehu, and wished to know what he wanted. Then Jehu told them; and though they were not good men, and did not like the prophet, yet God turned their hearts towards Jehu, and they spread their garments under him in token of his dignity, and blew their trumpets, and cried, "Jehu is king."

Jehu then ordered that no soldier should enter Jezreel; so that the news

might not reach the two kings who were there. Then he took his chariot and went to Jezreel. As he approached with his company, a watchman on the tower spied him out, and Joram sent a horseman to ask what the news was, and whether peace was made. But Jehu told him he had nothing to do with peace or war, but to go behind him, and follow him. As he did not return, a second was sent; and, when he did not return, Joram, accompanied by Ahaziah, each in his chariot, went out to meet Jehu; for they now saw, by his furious driving, who was coming, Jehu being a very rash man.

As soon as Joram saw Jehu he cried out, "Is it peace, Jehu?" Jehu then reproached him with his idolatry, and told him "No." Joram's heart instantly failed him, and he turned round to escape, and said to Ahaziah, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah!" At that moment Jehu drew a bow, and shot the arrow right through Joram's heart, "and he sank down in his chariot."

Then Jehu told his captain, Bidkar, to throw Joram's body into the ground which had belonged to Naboth, and which was close by; for, said he, when I and thou rode in attendance upon his father Ahab, the Lord laid this burden, or passed this sentence, upon him—which he did by Elijah the prophet—for his cruel robbery and murder of Naboth, to get his vineyard, and now the sentence is executed: "Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord."

When Ahaziah, the king of Judah, saw that his companion was slain, he fled, and Jehu ordered his servants to smite him also in his chariot, which they did, and he fled wounded to a place called Megiddo, and died; and his servants took him away, and buried him in Jerusalem.

The wicked queen Jezebel, of whom you before read, was still alive. She had lived through three reigns, but now God's sentence against her also must be executed. You remember that she was the wife of Ahab, and that she had urged him on to do many wicked things; for "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up." It was she who set up the worship of Baal; it was she who slew the Lord's prophets; it was she who planned the murder of Naboth to get his vineyard; well, therefore, might Jehu call her "a cursed woman," for the curse of a just God rested upon her head, who had, by her wickedness, been a curse to Israel.

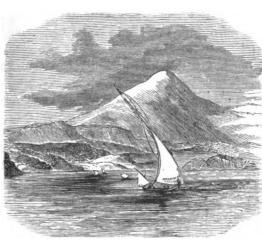
When Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel painted her face, and dressed herself up, to awe him by her show and dignity. And then she began to

provoke him, and asked him if Zimri had peace who had murdered his master. This was just the way to bring God's sentence upon her. Jehu directly asked the servants who attended her, if they were on his side, and, if so, to throw her out of the window. In a few moments the proud queen was hurled headlong from the window, and her brains were dashed against the wall and the pavement, and her body trampled upon by horses, and afterwards eaten by dogs; nothing remaining of her but "the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." Thus was God's sentence executed which he spoke by Elijah, as recorded in the twenty-first chapter of the First Book of Kings, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel."

### Ahab's Seventy Sons slain.

2 Kings x.

As God had appointed Jehu to destroy all the house of Ahab that were in Israel, he still proceeded with his dreadful work. Ahab had seventy sons and grandsons, for they are often called by the same name.



BURIAL-PLACE OF JEHU.

Jehu sent to Samaria and had the seventy sons of Ahab slain; and their heads were cut off, and put in baskets, and sent to him to show they were really dead.

After this, Jehu destroyed every portion of Ahab's house that he found in Israel; and all Ahab's priests of Baal. Ahaziah's house also, being related to Ahab, and having fallen into his sin, were like wise destroyed.

God approved of all that Jehu had done, for he had

been the executioner of a vile race of idolaters; but still he kept the golden calves which Jeroboam had set up, supposing them a good thing to prevent the Israelites from going into Judah to worship God in his temple there. God therefore punished Jehu, and the people of Israel, by allowing their

enemies to encroach upon their borders, and to cut their inhabitants to pieces, and so "in those days the Lord began to cut Israel short." God, however, promised to reward Jehu for the good he had done in destroying idolatry, and that his children, and great-great-grandchildren, called here the fourth generation, should, for these services rendered to him, sit upon the throne of Israel. God never forgets to reward those who serve him; and if he rewarded Jehu, who, in doing these things, was forwarding his own ambition, how much more will he reward the "works of faith, and labors of love," performed by those who trust in his mercy, and delight in his service!

Jehu reigned twenty-eight years; was buried in Samaria, and succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz.

### Usurpation and Death of Athaliah.

#### 2 Kings xi.

E now, for a while, leave the affairs of Israel, to see what was done in Judah, on the death of Ahaziah.

Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, was daughter of the wicked Ahab, and possessed the same wicked spirit. As soon as she heard that her son was slain, she cruelly killed Ahaziah's young children, who, of course, were her grandchildren; one only escaped. Joash was then a little infant, and was cast away to die among the slain; but Jehosheba, the wife of the high priest, and a sister of Ahaziah, and therefore aunt to the infant, took him up, and ran away with him secretly, and hid him in one of the priests' chambers.

For six years the cruel Athaliah reigned, but when the young prince was seven years old, the priest showed him to the elders of the people; bound them by a sacred oath to secrecy; set guards to the temple, and solemnly crowned him. The people, tired of the reign of such a base creature, were delighted at seeing the young Joash, clapped their hands and shouted, "God save the king!" Athaliah, hearing the noise, went to see what was the matter, and when she found Joash made king, she cried out, "Treason, treason!" but nobody would help her; and, if any had dared to do so, Jehoiada gave orders to have them slain. So they thrust her away from the temple and slew her. Thus God caused the punishment of a cruel murderer and usurper. "Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Having restored the rightful family to the throne, the high priest made the people swear to be faithful to the service of the true God, and then destroyed the temple and altars of Baal, and slew the wicked priest of Baal, who had deluded the people, by pretending that an idol was God. So the people were now peaceable and happy.

### The Reign of Joash, King of Judah.

2 Kings xii.

JOASH, or Jehoash, began to reign over Judah in the seventh year of the reign of Jehu over Israel, Jehu having begun his reign when Joash was an infant. Though Ahaziah was his father, his mother was not Athaliah, so that he was not of the wicked house of Ahab, for "his mother's name was Zibiah, of Beer-sheba, a city in the tribe of Simeon."

While Jehoiada, the high priest, was his instructor, Joash did what was right. The people, however, though they worshipped Jehovah, still kept their high places in imitation of the heathen; and, as these had now been long established, they became attached to old customs, and found it more convenient to worship God there, than in his temple; but, in so doing, they were disobeying God's command, and, therefore, could expect no blessing.

The house of the Lord had now been much neglected, and was out of repair, and Joash adopted means to save money for it, and had it well repaired.

Joash, however, afterwards disgraced himself by his cowardly conduct towards Hazael, king of Syria, of whom we have read; for Hazael, having taken Gath, and being upon his march towards Jerusalem, Joash, instead of boldly opposing him, and trusting to the protection of God, gave him all the treasures of the temple to induce him to go back. Joash, having declined in his zeal for God's glory, lost the protection of God, and, at last, his servants conspired against him and slew him, after having reigned forty years, and his son Amaziah reigned in his stead.

## The Death of the Prophet Elisha.—The Dead Man raised to Life in his Sepulchre.

#### 2 KINGS XIII.

ON the death of Jehoahaz, Jehoash, or Joash, his son, came to the throne; and now there were two kings of that name reigning; for Joash, king of Judah, was yet living, and in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. This Joash, king of Israel, reigned sixteen years, and so lived in the reign of Amaziah, who, we said, at the close of the last chapter, succeeded his father Joash, as king of Judah.

In the reign of this Joash of Israel, the prophet Elisha died. The king valued him as a good man and a prophet; and the king went to see him, and grieved to think he was about to die; for now Israel was so weak, he

would have been like chariots and horsemen to protect it by his prayers and advice. And the king "wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

Elisha the prophet, being taught by God about what would happen for Israel, now encouraged Joash before he died. And he told him to open the window eastward, and shoot with an arrow. Joash did so, and he told him



INTERIOR OF A ROCK SEPULCHRE.

that was a sign that the Syrians, who ruled to the eastward of Israel, should be conquered by him. Then he told him to thrust his arrows into the ground, and Joash did so three times. The prophet was then angry with him, for he told him this was done by way of a sign, and had he shown greater earnestness, and thrust his arrows six times into the ground, he should quite have overcome the Syrians.

Elisha died, and was buried in a sepulchre, and here is a remarkable story mentioned of what happened after he was buried:

Some Israelites were carrying a dead body to a grave in the usual burialplace, when they saw a party of Moabites coming, who were marching about for plunder; and the Israelites fearing lest they should fall into their hands, let down the body into the tomb which was nearest to them, instead of proceeding further. This happened to be the sepulchre of Elisha, and as soon as the body touched that of the prophet, the dead man came to life, and stood upon his feet! It was not, indeed, Elisha's body that made him come to life, but the power of God, who thus honored the bones of his prophet, and encouraged Joash to believe that what such a man had told him would surely come to pass, for he was the servant of God.

Joash found Elisha's words true; for God had compassion on Israel, and delivered them from their oppressors, the Syrians; and Joash beat them three times, and recovered all the cities of Israel which had been taken from them.

# The Reign of Amaziah, King of Judah.—The Reign of Jeroboam, the Son of Joash, King of Israel.

#### 2 Kings xiv.

WE told you that Amaziah succeeded his father Joash, king of Judah, who was murdered by his servants. He began to reign in Judah, in the second year of the reign of Joash, king of Israel. He was then twenty-five years old, and "reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem." This king kept up the worship of God, but still allowed the people to burn incense on the high places, which God had forbidden. He did not let the murderers of his father escape, though they were, probably, great and powerful men in the kingdom. He reconquered the Edomites, who had long revolted from their subjection to Judah, and slew ten thousand of them in battle.

Amaziah, however, grew haughty, and, for no cause of offence, sent word to Joash, king of Israel, that he would fight with his army.

To humble his pride, God allowed him to go to battle, when Joash defeated him, took him prisoner, marched into Jerusalem by a breach in the wall, and carried off its treasures, and hostages, or persons of rank, as a security for better behavior in future.

Thus was Amaziah humbled; and so, some time or other, will all the proud be abased.

Amaziah lived fifteen years after Joash, king of Israel, had died. Like his father, he then perished from a conspiracy of his subjects. To escape them, he fled from his chief city, Jerusalem, into Lachish, a fortified city in

the tribe of Judah; but they followed him there, and slew him: afterwards, they took his body to Jerusalem, to bury him with the rest of their kings. The people then declared his son Azariah king, who was then sixteen years old.

Amaziah had reigned nearly fifteen years when Joash, the king of Israel, who defeated him, died; and was succeeded by his son Jeroboam, as before stated.

Jeroboam reigned in Samaria, the capital of Israel, forty-one years. He also did evil in the sight of the Lord, like his forefathers; he was, however, of some use to Israel; for notwithstanding their sinfulness, God, who is rich in mercy, still determined to spare the nation, and he gave Jeroboam victories over the Syrians, and other nations, their enemies; and so their coasts, or borders, were restored, which had been taken away from them.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Zachariah.

## The Reigns of Azariah, King of Judah; Menahem, King of Israel; and of Jotham, King of Judah.

#### 2 Kings xv.

In the last chapter we learned that Azariah succeeded his father Amaziah as king of Judah; and that he became king at sixteen years of age. His reign was long, for he governed Judah fifty-two years. Azariah did some good, like his father, but he displeased God; and as God then showed his displeasure by frequently punishing the ungodly even in this life, he smote this king with a leprosy which he had till the day of his death. As he was unfit to mix with his court as a king, he was shut up in a lone house, and his son Jotham managed the affairs of his kingdom. On his death, Jotham succeeded him.

In Israel there were several kings, during the long reign of Azariah over Judah.

Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam, reigned over Israel only six months; he displeased God by doing evil, and so he gave him up, unprotected, to the attacks of traitors. This was the last king of the family of Jehu, and God's word came true by the prophet, that his children should reign to the fourth generation.

Shallum reigned a month, and was killed by Menahem. Menahem then became king and reigned ten years.

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Pekahiah, his son, succeeded him, and Azariah was then still reigning in Judah. Pekahiah reigned two years over Israel. He also allowed the people to worship the calves; and a captain of his, named Pekah, formed a plot against him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

Pekah reigned twenty years, which was a long reign for one who had got the throne by violence. He also was as bad as the kings of Israel before him. During his reign, as the people still continued to displease God, and their wicked kings did not reprove them, God gave them up to be punished by their foreign enemics; and Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, conquered ever so much of the land, and carried away half of the ten tribes of Israel into captivity, or made prisoners of them. This king, though he reigned long, was slain at last in a conspiracy, as he had slain his predecessor; and Hoshea, who slew him, reigned in his stead.

Azariah, the leprous king of Judah, who reigned so long, was now dead, and Jotham, his son, who had managed his affairs during his confinement, was seated on the throne as his father's lawful successor. He began his reign in Judah when Pekah had been reigning nearly two years in Israel. He came to the crown when he was twenty-five, and "he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem." He did many things that were good; but still suffered the high places to remain, where incense was burned, which God abhorred. You may observe that his father Azariah is here called Uzziah, which was another name by which he was sometimes called. There was more good in Jotham than in the other kings, and he took an interest in God's worship, and "built the higher gate of the house of the Lord."

## The Reign of Ahaz, King of Judah.

2 Kings xvi.

WHEN Jotham died, his son and successor Ahaz began his reign in Judah, while Pekah still reigned in Israel.

Ahaz was a dreadful idolater. He began to reign when he was twenty years old, and "reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem;" so that he must have done much harm to his people during that time, by setting them so wicked an example. He even "made his son to pass through the fire," a cruel ceremony performed in honor of Moloch, an idol-god of the Ammonites, and as a proof that he devoted his son to his false religion. A writer, who wrote some hundreds of years ago, says that he had seen in his time, in some

cities, piles kindled once a year, over which not only boys but men would leap, and infants were carried by their mothers through the flames; which seemed to be done to obtain pardon for sin, and to purify the soul; and he thinks that this was like the custom here practised by the wicked Ahaz.

To punish this wicked king, God sent, or allowed, Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the king of Israel, to make war with him. They even got to Jerusalem, and besieged Ahaz in his capital. They did not, however, succeed in taking it, and dethroning him; but Rezin took Elath, a sea-port

on the Red Sea, that formerly belonged to Edom, but was now in the possession of Judah.

To get completely rid of these attacks, Ahaz sent to Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, who was the enemy of Israel, and had carried off half the people as prisoners, and he offered to become his servant, or to be subject to him by paying him rich presents, if he would but take his part. So he now agreed to give him the silver and gold of the Lord's house, and of his own royal house, if he would protect him.

Tiglath-pileser was very well pleased at the terms, and marched against Damascus, the capital of Syria, and took the people away into slavery and killed Rezin, who had probably hastened back to save his own city, instead of taking that of Ahaz.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners." By connecting himself with the king of Assyria, Ahaz plunged more into idolatry.

He paid that king a visit at Damascus, and



THE AMMONITISH MOLOCH.

there he saw a heathen altar that he liked, and ordered one to be made like it directly, and to be set up in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. And he displaced God's altar, and offered sacrifices upon the heathen altar; and he almost broke in pieces the beautiful brazen sea, which was supported by brass oxen, and took away the oxen, and laid the great laver on the floor; and he removed the splendid covering from the king's house to the temple, which belonged to the temple; and it seems to have been given to the king of Assyria for his use.

Ahaz was cut off by death in the midst of his days, in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and his son Hezekiah reigned in his stead.

## Hoshea, the last King of Israel.—The Tribes of Israel carried away into Captivity.

#### 2 Kings xvii.

PEKAH, king of Israel, was slain by Hoshea, during the reign of Ahaz in Judah.

This Hoshea reigned nine years over Israel. He was not so bad as other kings of Israel, but he was not a pious king, and anything short of true piety is displeasing to God. Israel had now run great lengths in wickedness, and if he did not urge them on as others had done before him, he did not restrain them from sin, and so God now punished the nation severely for their sins. He is long-suffering, but when sinners do not repent, his wrath at length falls upon them, and then he is a "consuming fire."



CARRIED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY.

Shalmanezer was now king of Assyria, "and Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents," just as the king of Judah had done. He, however, tried to shake off the yoke of Shalmanezer, and corresponded with the king of Egypt to invite him to be his friend, and neglected to pay to Assyria what he agreed to pay. Shalmanezer soon found out what he was doing, and fell upon him, took him away and

put him in fetters, and thrust him into prison.

The king of Assyria then besieged Samaria, the capital city of Israel, which held out three years against him; and, having taken it, he carried the Israelites away into captivity, and scattered them in various parts of his dominions. So, even all the people of rank were made slaves and beggars, and this evil came upon them for trusting in false gods, living in the practice of sin, and neglecting the Lord God of Israel.

If you read from the seventh to the twenty-third verse of this chapter, you will see an account of the offences of these people against God, and how they hardened their hearts against his commandments and followed the

ways of the wicked heathen. And so "the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight."

Thus were the ten tribes of Israel scattered and lost on account of their sins, and they have never been recovered to this day; and thus their land became a habitation for idolaters.

### The good Hezekiah, King of Judah.

2 Kings xviii., xix.

AT the time that Israel were carried away into captivity by the Assyrians. Hezekiah the con of All Assyrians, Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, was king of Judah. He ascended the throne in the third year of the reign of Hoshea over Israel, at the age of twenty-five, and reigned in Jerusalem, over Judah, twentynine years.

God was pleased with this king, for "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did." "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves," all of which were devoted to idolatry; and, among the rest, he "brake in pieces," or ground to powder, "the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for, unto those days, the children of Israel did burn incense to it;" and he called it "Nehushtan;"—which means, brass, a mere piece of brass, which it is the greatest folly to worship. "And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth,"-"he rebelled" and threw off the yoke of Assyria, which his father had submitted to, when he said to Tiglath-pileser "I am thy servant;" and "he smote the Philistines," who in his father's time had marched into Judah and taken many places

However, in order to try Hezekiah's trust in God, and to punish his wicked subjects, God suffered the king of Assyria, who had destroyed Israel, to march a large force against him, and he took his "fenced cities," or what we call the frontier towns or garrisons, on the borders of the country.

Hezekiah was frightened; and he sent to tell the king of Assyria that he was sorry for having given him offence, and entreated him to go back, and he would give him anything, for so doing, that he might desire. demanded a sum of money worth about two million dollars. This

obliged Hezekiah to empty the public treasures, and to take all the gold and silver of the temple, even to the ornaments of the posts and the doors. Hezekiah was not right in paying all this money, for there was a prophet then in Judah, and had he gone to him he would have learnt that God could deliver him without this sacrifice. But, as I have told you, he was frightened; and, although he was a good king, he did what was wrong.

Notwithstanding that Hezekiah had paid the king of Assyria to go back, yet, when he had got the money, he probably thought to himself, "Now Hezekiah's kingdom is surely mine. He has no money to pay an army, and, if he was so weak before as to be frightened, he must be more so now I have got his treasures." So this base cheating king, instead of withdrawing his army, as he had agreed to do, sent three generals, with a large host, against Jerusalem, and kept the money, too, which was paid him to go back.

Hezekiah now found it was in vain to treat with such a tyrant, and he did what he ought to have done before—he rent his clothes, and put on sackeloth as a sign of humiliation, and he went to pray in the house of the Lord. He also sent messengers to Isaiah, the prophet, who then lived in Judah, and entreated him to pray that God would direct and protect him, for he knew not what to do.

God spoke to the prophet's mind, and he told Hezekiah not to fear; for the wicked king, who had despised the name of God, should be suddenly and totally subdued by his almighty power.

As Hezekiah did not send any message to the king of Assyria, he received another insolent message from him. And he told him, "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?"

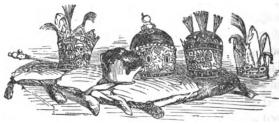
When Hezekiah received his letter, he went and spread its contents before the Lord. God knew what it contained, but this was a sign that he wished to have God's direction.

God heard Hezekiah's prayer, and the very night after the blasphemous message had been sent from the king of Assyria "the angel of the Lord went out, and smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred four-score and five thousand," or a hundred and eighty-five thousand; "and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses!"

Hezekiah would have been afraid to fight such an army, but God fought for him. "The angel of the Lord" is said to have done this, and God perhaps employed a glorious spirit in this work, but anything that does his purpose is his angel or messenger. The Scripture does not say what kind of a death this army suffered; some think that they died by a plague, for there are plagues that carry people off in much less time than an hour: a dreadful pest lately destroyed many inhabitants of Europe, and God could then have sent it into a whole army.

However, while we may be innocently curious to find out in what way

Sennacherib the king of Assyria was vanquished, the word of God came to pass, and he escaped among the few that remained alive, and returned whence he came. This ought to have convinced him that the God



ASSYRIAN CHOWNS.

of Israel was the true God, but he returned to his wicked idolatry, and, "while he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god," two of his sons "smote him with the sword," and "Esar-haddon, his son, reigned in his stead." The Jews say that the reason why his two sons slew him was because he was going to sacrifice them to his god; he was, indeed, idolater enough, and tyrant enough, to do so, but of this we have no account in the Scriptures.

Thus, in Sennacherib you see how God can cast down the proud; and in Hezekiah, how he can raise up the humble.

### Hezekiah's severe Sickness and wonderful Recovery.

#### 2 Kings xx.

OOD king Hezekiah was taken very ill, and had a bad boil, and the prophet Isaiah went to him and told him to prepare to die. He was then but a young man and was aiming to improve the condition of his country, and no doubt felt much pained to leave it before he could do more in the service of God. When, therefore, he heard he was to die, he wept, and he earnestly begged of God to lengthen his life. God immediately

heard his earnest prayer, and the prophet went back to tell him that God would add fifteen more years to his life. He was the only man who ever knew exactly how long he should live; and, most likely, he improved the remainder of his days by still more diligently serving God; though, in one instance, he gave way to pride, and did not render to God, who had made him what he was, all the honor and glory which was due to his name. This instance I shall soon mention. Isaiah now told the king that although God would spare his life, he must use means to cure his disorder: so the prophet told him to take a lump of figs and to apply it to his boil, and by this remedy he would cure it.

At this time, the king of Babylon, a heathen, wished to make a friend of Hezekiah, and sent messengers to him with letters of friendship and a present. Hezekiah received them very kindly, but foolishly and vainly displayed all his treasures, and showed them how rich he was, that they might report it to their master.

Then Isaiah visited the king, and told him, that all his treasures should, by-and-by, go to the king of Babylon; and his children, of another generation, should be made slaves in his palace. This was to humble Hezekiah's pride, and if his children had been humbled too, the king of Babylon would not have overcome them; but they were as proud as their father of their treasures, without his pious disposition to humble them as he was humbled, and so the king of Babylon, knowing how rich they were, went to war with them, and conquered them, as you will hereafter learn.

# Manasseh's exceedingly wicked Reign in Judah.—Amon's wicked Reign. 2 Kings xxi.

ON the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh, his son, then twelve years old, succeeded him. It is supposed that a part of Hezekiah's distress in that sickness recorded in the twentieth chapter was due to the fact that he had then no heir. He probably married Hephzibah, the mother of Manasseh, soon after his recovery from this sickness, and Manasseh was born three years later; the prophet Isaiah, the lifelong friend of Hezekiah, in his joy at this auspicious marriage and the birth of an heir to the throne, wrote that beautiful prophecy of the future glory of Zion (Isaiah, chap. lxii.), in which, in the fourth verse, he brings in the name of the queen, in its full significance—"but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." But the good

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prophet's hopes of Manasseh were doomed to disappointment; for he was more wicked than any other king of Judah, and was a monster of iniquity.

The people were as wicked as their king, and therefore God threatened to punish Jerusalem, as he did the city of Samaria, and the house of Ahab. Judah should be led into captivity, like Israel, for now their crimes had become exceedingly great; they had "shed innocent blood very much;" it is supposed that most of the good men who had opposed the idolatry were put to death by this wicked king, and that among others the venerable prophet Isaiah, who must have been ninety years old at this time, was sawn asunder.

After a reign of fifty-five years Manasseh died. In this book we hear no more about him; but in the Second Book of Chronicles, we learn that, late in life, he repented and prayed to God for pardon, and his prayer was heard.

Manassch was buried in the garden of his house, and not in the sepulchres of the kings, and his son Amon succeeded him.

Amon began to reign when he was twenty-two years old, and he reigned only two years. The king was wicked like his father, but he did not repent like him. He was killed by a conspiracy of his servants.

### Josiah, the most excellent King of Judah.

2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

TOSIAH was the next king; he was Amon's son.

• This prince came to the crown at eight years of age, and he reigned thirty-one years.

He turned out to be a most pious youth. He loved and served God very early, and he did so all the days of his life.

This good young king repaired the house of the Lord, which had been suffered to go to decay. And Hilkiah, the high priest, having found the book of the law, which had long been neglected, the king had it read to him, and was much grieved to find how the people had broken it, and to what dreadful punishments they were exposed for their wickedness. Then he sent to be instructed about God's will, from a holy prophetess whose name was Huldah, and she foretold what evil was about to come upon Jerusalem for its sins: but because Josiah's heart was tender, and he had humbled himself before God, he should die in peace, and should never see the evil that was threatened.

Then the king, knowing the threatenings of God, tried to bring the

people over to repentance for their sins. And he gathered together the elders, and the priests, and the prophets, and a very large number of the people, and went up to the house of the Lord. Before this assembly, he stood like a minister and servant of God, and read the book of the law. Here the king and the people made a covenant or agreement to serve God, and they knew that his word promised that he would be their God to love them, and to do them good, if they would be his faithful people.

Then the king began to show how much he was in earnest, and took away all the temptations to idolatry. Every vessel that had been used for the serving of false gods was taken out of Jerusalem, that the city might no longer be defiled, and was burned, and the ashes were carried to Bethel, where one of Jeroboam's calves was placed; that place being now in the hands of the king of Judah.

And he put down the idolatrous priests, and he burned a carved imitation of a grove, used in the idol worship, and strewed the ashes in indignation on the graves of those who had died idolaters. In fact, every altar, and every high place, and every image, and every grove, which had been suffered to remain in Judah for ages, and which former kings had built in their folly and wickedness, Josiah totally destroyed.

You may remember reading, in the thirteenth chapter of First Kings, that when king Jeroboam was wickedly burning incense upon an idol-altar, a prophet from Judah "cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." And now the word of God came to pass; for Josiah took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon this altar, and polluted it, "according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words."

Josiah next "slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem," having destroyed "all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger." After the ten tribes were carried away, many of the poor who remained in the land came under allegiance to Judah, and thus the kings of Judah regained part of their ancient territory; so that this was Josiah's kingdom.

Josiah, on his return, ordered the solemn ordinance of the passover to be devoutly kept. This had been appointed in remembrance of God's sparing

Israel, and passing over their dwellings, when the destroying angel killed all the first-born in the land of Egypt. But the kings of Israel had despised and neglected this among God's ordinances, and in Judah it had too often met with the same treatment. Now, however, it was observed with a reverence with which it had not been treated before since the days of Samuel, the last of the judges of Israel.

Yet, in secret, the foolish people loved their foolish idols; and God, who knew their hearts, determined to punish them, and to reject them, as they had rejected him.

This punishment was to be as signal and dreadful as their crimes; and now God took good Josiah away from the evil to come. Pharaoh-nechoh, the king of Egypt, was going to war with the king of Assyria, and he began

to march through the territories of Judah. This Josiah would not allow, as he was at peace with Assyria; and he went to prevent the Egyptian army from going that way. At the very first onset good Josiah was slain. He seems to have forgotten himself in this instance, and not to have consulted God's prophets, whether or not it was right and safe to go. However, God cverruled this error, to take



JEHOAHAZ LED CAPTIVE BY PHARAON.

the good king to himself; and his servants took him in his chariot to Jerusalem, "and buried him in his own sepulchre."

The people then took Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, and made him king; but his reign lasted a very short time—only three months. It is probable that he marched against Pharaoh to avenge his father's death, and so was made prisoner by Pharaoh, who also made Judah pay a tribute, amounting, as is thought, to about two hundred and ten thousand dollars.

Jehoahaz was 'not Josiah's 'eldest son, so Pharaoh at once deposed him, that he might fight no more against him, and he set his brother Eliakim, who was two years older, upon the throne of Judah; and he gave him a new name, and called him Jehoiakim, which would make him remember that he owed his throne to Pharaoh, who changed his name, as was his

custom to do, when he gave any person great honor. You recollect that a former Pharaoh, in this way, gave a new name to Joseph.

Jehoahaz died a prisoner in Egypt.

"Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem." He was a wicked king.

## Jehoiakim's Reign, and his Son Jehoiachin's short Reign in Judah.— Zedekiah's Reign.

#### 2 Kings xxiv.

TEBUCHADNEZZAR, the king of Babylon, made war against Jehoiakim, and for three years he was his servant, or became tributary to the king of Babylon, paying him money to let him be at peace. At the end of that time, perhaps, encouraged by the king of Egypt, who had just put him on the throne, Jehoiakim refused to pay any more tribute; "and the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it; according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets." Nebuchadnezzar, in revenge, sent these bands, or bodies of nations, who were subject to him; but it is said to be the Lord who did it, for he suffered it to be done to punish Judah, as he had threatened. "Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood), which the Lord would not pardon." Manasseh repented, and was pardoned; but his wicked people, who did these cruel deeds for him, and did not repent like him, were not pardoned: and now, therefore, God punished them.

We read, in the thirty-sixth chapter of 2 Chronicles, that Jehoiakim was taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar, and bound in fetters to be carried to Babylon.

In the midst of these troubles his son Jehoiachin came to the crown, in the eighth year of his age, "and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. He also did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done."

Nebuchadnezzar's servants, or officers and soldiers, now closely besieged Jerusalem, and Jehoiachin being unable to resist them, went out of the city

and surrendered himself prisoner, with "his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers." The king of Babylon then took away all the king's treasures, and all the treasures of the temple, and all the golden vessels which Solomon had made. So Jerusalem was stripped of its wealth, and its chief inhabitants, and its soldiers, and "its craftsmen," or clever workmen, "and smiths," that they might make no more warlike instruments for those that were remaining; "none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land;" and ten thousand of its great, and rich, and brave men, with all the king's family, were carried away to Babylon.

The king of Babylon now set up a poor feeble king, without wealth, and without weapons of war, just to keep the poor people in order, who remained in Judah, and were of use to till the land. It is said that he "made Mattaniah, his father's brother, king in his stead;" that is, he made Mattaniah, brother to Jehoiakim, who was Jehoiachin's father, king instead. And the king of Babylon changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah—a custom which, I before told you, was often practised in such cases, and which reminded the king that he only held his crown at the pleasure of the king of Babylon.

Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah, as he was now called, was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He was as wicked as his bad forefathers, and so God gave him up to ruin. He rebelled against the king of Babylon, hoping to get free from his power; but it was in vain. Judah had now come to the day of reckoning; and Jerusalem, which once had been the favorite place of God, but which had, for numerous years, been so depraved, was speedily to be laid in ruins.

### The Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

#### 2 Kings xxv.

In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar marched a large army against the city, built forts, and battered its walls. After two years' siege the city was taken by storm. It was "broken up;" that is, the besiegers made a breach in the wall, by which they entered. Zedekiah and his soldiers, being unable to resist, escaped out of the city at night, by a private way; but they were pursued, and overtaken in the plain of Jericho, where Zedekiah was made prisoner: he was then tried for his rebellion, and sentenced as guilty. His sons were executed before his eyes; and, according to a cruel punishment still practised in the East, by way of punishment

for rebellion, his eyes were put out, and he was taken prisoner to Babylon. The king of Babylon afterwards sent Nebuzar-adan, his chief captain, to destroy what remained of Jerusalem, and every house was burned down. The wall of the city was also broken entirely down by the army of the Chaldees. Among other noble buildings, Solomon's fine temple was now



DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

completely destroyed, after its being ransacked, and everything valuable taken out of it, its gold and silver, and brass vessels, and ornaments.

Thus perished the beautiful temple, which had stood four hundred and fifteen years; and it is supposed that, among other things that perished in it, was the ark, with what it contained; for this ark was the sign of God's presence when he was worshipped there in sincerity; but now that presence was gone, and all was desolation.

Judah was carried away out of their land, about a thousand and twenty-four years after they were put in possession of it by Joshua.

We are told in conclusion, that Jehoiachin, who was made prisoner before Zedekiah, remained in prison thirty-seven years. At the end of that time Evil-merodach succeeded his father Nebuchadnezzar, and "he did lift up the" drooping "head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, out of prison; and he

spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him," as prisoners, "in Babylon; and he changed his prison garments, and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life," being allowed to have a table in his presence in his own palace.

#### CHARACTERS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

DAVID		AHAZIAH		
SOLOMON	The wise.	JOASHThe backslider.		
REHOBOAM	The simple.	AMAZIAHThe rash.	JOSIAHT	he tender-hearted.
		UzziahThe mighty.	JEHOAHAZ	1
A6A	The upright.	JOTHAM The peaceable.	JEHOIAKIM	The last of the
Јеновнарнат	The religious.	AHAZThe idolater.	JEHOLACHIN	wicked.
JEHORAM	The wicked.	HEZEKIAH The reformer.	ZEDEKIAH	)

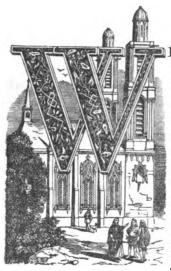
In this list we have given us the distinguishing features of the lives of kings, some of whom are recognized as the greatest known either to sacred or profane history. These men have had wonderful power and vast influence over the minds and hearts of the people who were committed to them as subjects; and such power and influence has always been exercised in accordance with the characters given them. They have thus written their lives not only plainly upon the vast number of minds of the generation to which they belonged, and with which they have passed away, but upon a history that doubtless shall make its impress upon all the future ages of the earth. Those whose lives have been acceptable and good will always command the admiration, attention and esteem of men; those whose characters have been idolatrous and wicked will always arouse thoughts and feelings of great dislike, if not execration and loathing. Thus, even urging no argument in regard to the higher and infinitely more important life, the evidence is plain that good character is above price, even in its uses in, and effects upon, this life.



ANCIENT JUDEAN RUINS.

## FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES:

On "Registers of the Times," or "Genealogies of the Twelve Tribes," was compiled by the prophet Ezra, from the records of the Hebrew nation, which had been kept by what we may here call the king's historiographers. This and the second book of Chronicles were regarded by the Jews as one, and called "words of days," or "of diaries," or "journals." Together they afford us a sort of abstract of sacred narrative from the creation, through a period of between three and four thousand years. The object of their writing and preservation clearly seems to be the setting forth of important facts not given in other inspired books. There is much in them that is new and important, and they contribute not a little toward making more intelligible certain parts of the New Testament. Our Saviour and the Apostles have referred to them variously in Matthew, Luke, and 1 Peter.



E left the Jews in a state of captivity in Babylon; we shall, by-and-by, read of their deliverance. But before we come to that we have to glance over the Books of Chronicles, which were written after the Jews returned from captivity, in order to preserve the proper record of their families, and to give a particular account of the kings of Judah. This was very important—as from Judah it was expected, according to prophecy, that the Messiah, or Christ, should spring. These books give some particulars, in the life of David, which are not mentioned so precisely in the Kings. They also furnish us with a fuller description of the

temple than we had before, and a more lengthened account of Solomon. Some new particulars respecting the kings of Israel are likewise added. The last two chapters, in particular, speak of the beginning of the release of the Jews by Cyrus, as we shall soon have occasion to read.

The first nine chapters are all genealogies, or accounts of families in the order in which one generation lived after another for many ages. We have here all the families that sprung from Adam, from Noah, from Abraham from Judah, from David, and from all the tribes of Israel.

The remaining chapters of this book amount to twenty. They are chiefly

repetitions of what we have before read in the books of Samuel and Kings. The tenth chapter gives an account of the fatal battle of Saul with the Philistines. The eleventh treats of David's being anointed king, and of his mighty men. The twelfth contains a list of those who joined David before the death of Saul, when Saul persecuted him from place to place. The thirteenth informs us of David's taking the ark from Kirjath-jearim, when Uzzah was struck dead for meddling with it; and David left it at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. The fourteenth chiefly records David's victories over the Philistines. The fifteenth describes the bringing of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David. The sixteenth contains the account of David's appointing proper ministers to worship before the ark; and a thanksgiving psalm composed by him for the occasion. The seventeenth informs us of David's intention to build a house for

God, which he told to Nathan the prophet, but respecting which God told him, by Nathan, that his son should build it. The eighteenth repeats the tale of David's victories over his enemies, as recorded in the Second Book of Samuel. The ninetcenth mentions again the insult offered to David's messengers by Hanun, the son of Nahash, king of the Ammonites, to whom he sent to condole with him on the death of



DAVID'S MESSENGERS.

his father; and the subsequent victory gained by Joab over the Ammonites, and over the Syrians whom they had hired to fight with them. The twentieth describes some giants who were slain in David's victories. The twenty-first shows us the sin of David in numbering the people of Israel; his repentance; his choice of three evils as a punishment—when he chose pestilence, and lost seventy thousand men; the stopping of the pestilence by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and the erection of an altar there for thanksgiving to God. In the twenty-second, David charges his son to build a house for God. The twenty-third gives sketches of the Levites, their descent, and offices in the temple. The twenty-fourth arranges the order of the priests. The twenty-fifth, the number of the singers. The twenty-sixth is "concerning the divisions of the porters" of the temple, whose business it was to open and shut its doors, to keep all impure and improper

persons from entering into it, or any of the vessels being carried out of it. and to prevent tumults and riots about it. The twenty-seventh mentions the twelve legions of soldiers, with their captains, which served David in rotation every month. The twenty-eighth gives us the exhortation of David to the principal men of Israel, and to his son Solomon, respecting the building of the temple. The twenty-ninth continues the same subject, and then narrates the character of the offerings willingly made by the people; describes also the very beautiful mode of thanksgiving and praise resorted to by the king, together with the solemn worship of God by the people; refers to the abundant sacrifices and offerings unto the Lord, and the general gladness of the people; and, finally, recites the fact of the succession of Solomon to the throne, and the death of David. The latter is always an interesting event to the young student and reader of sacred history. And it may be well for us to make a passing reference therefore to a fact or two given us at the close of the chapter referred to. David reigned altogether, we are told, forty years; seven of these in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem. "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honor."

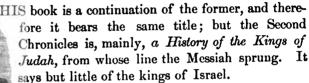
In the Chronicles, you will find some few little incidents and circumstances pointed out with which you were not made acquainted in the former books, but which you can perfectly understand without further explanation. In the books which are more particularly the records of Jewish history, there are very many plain incidents which commend themselves to the understanding of every reader—even the most youthful—and in regard to which, explanation, or even comment, seems unnecessary. It is such alone that we feel called upon to pass by, unless previously referred to.



BURIAL OF JUDAH'S GREAT KING.

## SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES:

On "Register of the Times" or "Genealogies of the Twelve Tribes." This was written, as the preceding, or "first" book, by the prophet Ezra, and, like the former, presents circumstances and events of the most useful and interesting nature, especially the genealogical tables which prove our Saviour to have come directly, in descent, from the stock of Abraham. For further facts see remarks under heading of the First Book, and read carefully the article below.



The first chapter relates that Solomon, being confirmed in his kingdom, went to Gibeon to sacrifice. The second, third, and fourth relate to the building of the temple. The fifth states the carrying of the ark into his temple. The sixth contains Solomon's beautiful prayer at its dedication. The seventh has an account of God's acceptance of the sacrifices offered at the dedication of the temple. The eighth mentions the cities which

Solomon built. The ninth informs us of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, and his great splendor. The tenth records the revolt of the ten tribes. The eleventh tells us of Rehoboam's preparing an army of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to fight the other tribes of Israel, but being forbidden by the prophet Shemaiah, they returned every man to his own house. The twelfth records the sad fact of the idolatry of Rehoboam and all Israel with him. The thirteenth chapter tells us of war between Abijah, king of Judah, the son of Rehoboam, and Jeroboam, the king of Israel. The fourteenth chapter relates the death of Abijah, and the succession of Asa, in his stead. The fifteenth chapter is a narrative of Asa's commendable zeal in destroying the idolatry of his people. The sixteenth records

the death of Asa. The seventeenth chapter records the accession of Jehoshaphat. The eighteenth mentions Jehoshaphat's alliance with the wicked Ahab, king of Israel, by marrying his son Joram to Athaliah. The nineteenth tells us about the good conduct of Jehoshaphat in managing his kingdom. The twentieth chapter states how the Moabites and Ammonites came against Jehoshaphat. The twenty-first chapter begins with the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. The twenty-second chapter commences with the reign of Ahaziah. The twenty-third chapter mentions the making of young Joash king, who was saved from the hands of Athaliah; and the punishment of that wicked woman by being slain. The twenty-fourth chapter records the good reign of Joash during the life-time of Jehoiada. The twenty-fifth chapter begins with the reign of Amaziah, the son of Joash; records his punishment of the murderers of his father, and his The twenty-sixth chapter is a brief history of the reign of Uzziah. He is sometimes called Azariah, and has been mentioned in the list of the kings of Judah, as having been smitten with leprosy. The twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters treat of the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz.

From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-second chapters inclusive, we have an account of the reign of the good king Hezekiah. The thirty-third is an account of that of his son Manasseh; and in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters are contained the acts of the reign of the pious king Josiah. The thirty-sixth chapter records the short reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, the last Jewish king, when Jerusalem was entirely destroyed, and the king and people carried off as captives into Babylon.



YOUNG JOASH AT REST IN THE TEMPLE.

## EZRA:

9m "the History of the Restoration of the Jews" from their captivity in Babylon; so called after the priest ≪ prophet that wrote it. It contains ten chapters, and was called one book with Nehemiah by the ancient Jews, who used the term "First and Second Book of Ezra," of the two which Roman Catholic writers still call the "First and Second Books of Esdras." The inspired nature of this book is very clearly proven. Its contents and value are fully given in the subject-matter annexed.

## The Proclamation of Cyrus for restoring the Temple.



OW let us return to the Jews. Long had they wept by the rivers of Babylon, and their musicians, who used to play their sweet harps in Israel to the praise of God, had hung them upon the willows growing in abundance upon the banks of the rivers, expecting never to be called to ure them again. But, after seventy years of captivity, light broke out on their night of darkness, and they saw the dawn of another day of hope and joy; for their long captivity was more dismal to them than a dark night is to us, and their prospect of deliverance more cheering than even to us are the first beams of the morning sun, peeping into the windows of our chamber.

Before we notice the contents of this book, it may be proper to tell you who Ezra was. He was a priest very skilful in the law, the son of Seraiah, the high priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar. He was also a ready scribe in the law of Moses, and a careful student and collector of the sacred books. He has been called a second Moses, having been instrumental, like him, in leading Israel out of captivity; in preserving the holy law, as Moses gave it; and having lived, as it is said, the same number of years, that is, one hundred and twenty.

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The first chapter begins with the proclamation of Cyrus, the king of Persia, who having conquered Babylon, as Babylon had conquered the Jews, found the Jews captives there, was moved by God to set them all at liberty, and gave them every encouragement to return to their own country. In his proclamation, Cyrus says to the Jews, "The Lord God of heaven hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people?—his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem."

Most eagerly did "the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, accept of this release, for God had raised up



BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

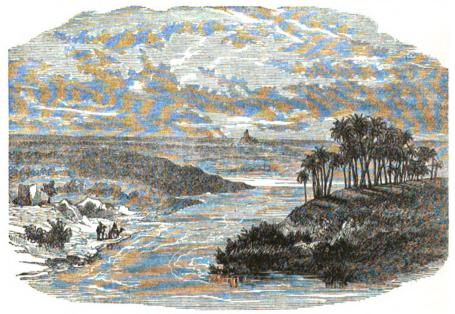
their spirits to go up to build the house of the Lord."

Cyrus also commanded that those who were rich should help those who were poor, and give them silver, gold, goods, and cattle, to enable them to return and live in their own country. So "all that were about them," the Chaldeans as well as the rich Jews, helped forward the return to the desolate land.

Besides the money, goods, and cattle, thus given to these people, God also inclined the heart of Cyrus to give up all the rich plunder of the temple, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away. This consisted of golden and silver chargers or dishes, knives, basins, and other vessels of gold and silver, amounting in all to five thousand four hundred.

The second chapter tells us how many "went up out of the captivity," and begins thus:—"Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity." The Jews are here called "children of the province," because Judah was no longer a flourishing kingdom, but a province or conquered country, governed by the deputies of the conquerors. Some of these are called after their fathers, as the "children of Asaph;" and some after the places from which they were carried away captive, as "the children of Bethlehem." The whole number that returned to their own

country is here stated at forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides seven thousand servants, and two hundred singing men. But then these were not the whole of the Jews. Many of the lower orders were left in the country to till the ground; but all that were ingenious, as artificers, or rich, or had any influence in the country, were taken away. Moreover, many now fixed in Babylon, and who had no love for their own country, and no religion to make them desirous of serving God in his temple, remained behind. Among those named as going out of captivity, you will read of the Nethinims; these were they who waited upon the Levites in the temple. In the sixty-third verse you also read, that "the Tirshatha" would not let the children of the priests that could not prove their genealogies, eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.



ANCIENT BABYLON.

'The Tirshatha is a word that signifies the governor, and means the chief man in authority over the Jews, which some suppose to have been Nehemiah. Of the Urim and Thummim you have before read, and you may remember that, through the Urim and Thummim, the priest used to inquire of the Lord for direction; but now this means of inquiry was lost, and till it should be recovered, if it ever should—when it might be found out

whether these doubtful persons had a right to live at the altar—the governor would not allow them to partake of those parts of the offerings and sacrifices which belonged to the priests.

See how God can do his people good, when, after offending him, they return to him with all their hearts! On account of their sins, they were chastised, by being made captives, and banished from their country, stripped of everything. Now they are willing and glad to enjoy their privileges, and know how to value them, and wish to return to the service of God, he makes all things to work together for their good. Their masters set them free, they are restored to their country, and the hearts of many are opened to aid them; and as in the former days the Egyptians aided their fathers with their "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment," in escaping from the house of bondage, God now sends them back abounding in riches. In the catalogue of their wealth there are mentioned, seven hundred and thirty-six horses, two hundred and forty-five mules, four hundred and thirty-five camels, six thousand seven hundred and twenty-five asses, and gold, silver, and precious stuffs. The amount of their gold has been computed at five million six hundred and ninety thousand dollars, which does not include the rich vessels of the temple that were restored. Besides the value of the gold, we must also notice that of the silver, which is reckoned at more than one million two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars of our money; making altogether, exclusive of the temple utensils, the sum of six million nine hundred and eighty-three thousand dollars in gifts of gold and silver.

Thus we find God, in the midst of judgments, remembered mercy, and gave the Jews favor in the land of their captivity.

Before I close this chapter, I must, however, prevent a mistake which you may be liable to make, without an explanation. The Jews here released were only those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which formed the kingdom of Judah. These, you remember, were carried away captives by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; and Babylon being conquered by Cyrus, king of Persia, they were now released by that conqueror. But the ten tribes, which formed the kingdom of Israel, were made captives by the Assyrians, and they were so scattered about by their conquerors, that they mixed themselves with the heathen, or were transported to very distant places, and they were never restored. Inquiries have often been made to see if any remnant of them can be found, but all in vain; and now for two thousand years, no one knows anything of them or their descendants.

# The Laying of the Foundation of the Second Temple.

#### EZRA III.

TAVING been restored to their land, the Jews did not long delay the rebuilding of the temple; but as the length of time it would take to rear such a superstructure was too long to wait for publicly worshipping God, they immediately set to work and prepared the altar, headed by Jeshua the priest, and Zerubbabel the chief prince.

When the altar was erected they offered up the continual burnt-offering, and observed all the set feasts of the Lord, and offered every man's free-will offering. And then they gave money to the masons to buy stones, and to the carpenters to buy timber, for the new temple. And they gave provisions to the people of Tyre and Zidon—who, probably, liked to be so paid in preference to receiving money—and from them they obtained cedar.

In the second year of their restoration, and when the materials were ready and the ground properly cleared, the building was begun; and all the Levites of twenty years of age and above were employed in helping on the work in every way in their power.

And now the priests were appointed to blow their trumpets while the foundation was laying; and the Levites to play upon their cymbals, which were musical metal instruments like hollow basins, held in each hand, and struck one against another.

And the priests and Levites "sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel." By singing "by course" is meant, that they sang by turns, and answered one another, praising God for bringing them back to their own land, and enabling them to rebuild the temple. "And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid."

It was now between fifty and sixty years since the old temple was destroyed; and many of the old men yet lived to remember it; and when the foundation of the new house was laid, they "wept with a loud voice." Why? Were they not glad too? Yes, they were glad; but they had also reason to weep, for they had seen what their younger brethren had not, and what they never could expect to see. They had no riches to build so splendid a temple as that which had been laid in ruins. And if they could have made it as splendid, its chief glory was departed. The most precious

treasures it contained were forever gone—the heavenly fire, the mercy-seat, the heavenly manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the divine Shechinah, and, most probably, the Urim and Thummim: all were lost in the general desolation.

Thus, with a singular mixture of joy and sorrow, was this second temple begun; for "the people could not discern the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

The prophet Haggai, however, comforted them on this occasion, by assuring them that the glory of this latter house should exceed that of the former, because the Lord (Jesus Christ) was to come to this temple, and fill it with his glory.

## The Building of the Temple hindered.

### EZRA IV.

No sooner had the Jews begun to rebuild their temple than the Samaritans, who greatly disliked them, and whom they also greatly disliked, used every kind of artifice to stop their work.

When they heard that these "children of the captivity," who had long been captives, or were the sons of captives, and who were still subjects of Cyrus—when they heard that they were building the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, they went to Zerubbabel, the prince, and to the chief of the fathers, and said, "Let us build with you." They pretended to want to share in the temple, which they knew the Jews could not allow; and they said, "We seek your God, as ye do." Now this was not true, for they worshipped idols. "Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chiefs of the fathers," very properly refused their aid, and said, "Ye have nothing to do with us, to build an house unto our God:" for they were neither of the same nation nor of the same religion.

Then these people, and others that united with them, who had been sent to occupy the land when Judah was carried into captivity, all united to thwart the work. They even hired persons to make it their business to contrive schemes against them. They could certainly impede them in various ways. Sometimes by quarrelling with the workmen; sometimes by hindering the purchase or arrival of materials; and sometimes persuading the king's servants not to allow them any aid in carrying the decree of Cyrus into execution. If Cyrus had been at home, perhaps he would have

inquired about their progress; but history informs us, that about this time he was engaged in wars abroad with the Lydians and Scythians, and so, leaving his son—who was no friend to the Jews—to govern in his absence, the work went on but slowly, and attended by many discouragements.

Ahasuerus—or Cambyses, as he is called in other histories—succeeded his father Cyrus; and, as soon as he was placed on the throne, the enemies of the Jews wrote letters of complaint against them, to make him look upon them with greater jealousy and dislike.

In the same way they afterwards wrote to Artaxerxes. He is thought by some to have been an impostor, who, feigning himself to be the brother of Cambyses—who had been put to death—usurped the empire. Some, however, think that this is another name given to Ahasuerus, who is also called

Darius; Artaxerxes being a common name for the kings of Persia, just as Pharaoh was for the kings of Egypt, and as Czar is now for the Emperors of Russia.

We have in this chapter a copy of the letter sent to the king, and signed by the principal men who lived in the land.

The last clause of the



PERSIAN MONARCH ADMINISTERING JUDGMENT.

letter was enough to frighten the king, for it warned him that if he did not take care, the Jews would not only shake off his yoke, and refuse to pay tribute themselves, but would seize on all his dominions on that side of the river, and annex them to their own.

So the king directly caused search to be made; and he found in the records an account of past efforts made by the Jews to set themselves free from their conquerors—which certainly was very natural—and he wrote to his chief officers in the land of Judæa, and told them he had found that the Jews had been seditious, and that, in past times, they had had mighty kings, who had subdued the neighboring nations, and therefore he commanded that the city should not be built till further orders.

Delighted at their success, the opponents of the Jews now made haste to Jerusalem, and took with them forces enough to oblige them to give up their work.

It is computed by the reigns of these kings, that the Jews had now been employed on their temple during fourteen years, and the work "ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia," which was for about three years.

## The Building of the Temple Continued.

EZRA V., VI.

In the second year of Darius, king of Persia, God stirred up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to reprove the Jews for their sloth, and negligence in building the temple, when they were careful enough to raise up goodly houses for themselves to dwell in.

The prophets roused the spirits of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and they again urged on the building of the temple, while the prophets helped them with encouragement and advice.

The old governors of the land were now dead, or removed by the new king, but their successors still interrupted the Jews. So Tatnai, the governor, and Shethar-boznai, and others, went to them and said, "Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?"—that is, the wall of the temple.

Then the Jews told them who were the persons engaged in erecting the building. And "the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews," looking favorably at them, so that they felt a secret comfort from heaven encouraging their hearts to go on with their work, till the matter should be settled by Darius, to whom it was referred.

The governor Tatnai then wrote to Darius, and told him that the Jews were going on with their temple, and that they said that Cyrus had made a decree to permit them so to do. And they advised the king to have the records searched, to see whether or not such a decree was really made in their favor.

Darius, therefore, gave orders to search the place where the government writings were kept, but where, it appears, the decree of Cyrus was not found. However, on further inquiry, it was discovered at Achmetha, which, was a city in Media, where the kings of Persia had their summer palace.

Darius, having learned its contents, then ordered the governors not to disturb the Jews, but to help them with money to go on with their work, and with cattle, and whatever they wanted for their sacrifices. And he also threatened that whoever interrupted them from that time should be hung-

EZRA. 461

on a gallows made of the wood of his own house, and his habitation should be completely destroyed, and made only fit for a dunghill. Tatnai immediately obeyed the commands of the king. "And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai, the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it," that is the temple—"according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, king of Persia." The writer of the history here mentions the different kings who favored the Jews after their captivity; respecting the last named there is, however, some difference of opinion; Darius had a son named Xerxes, who was his successor, but some think Artaxerxes Longimanus, his grandson, is here intended, for history states that he sent Ezra to Judæa with new privileges, and that he was kind to Nehemiah.

Thus the house was finished "in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king."

When the building was completed, "the children of Israel," that is, those of the ten tribes that remained after the body of the people were carried captive, or came with the Jews at their return—"the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the



TOMB OF CYRUS

children of the captivity," those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, "kept the dedication of this house of God with joy." And they offered "an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel." And they arranged the order of the priests to do the work in the temple by turns. And at its proper time they kept the passover. They also kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy. And God turned the heart of the "king of Assyria to them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel." Cyrus and his successors possessed all the rights of the kings of Assyria as well as of Persia, and therefore were called by both names.

We should have thought that, after such an instance of severe punishment in being carried into captivity, and after such a display of God's goodness in their restoration, the Jews would never again have offended so

grievously against God; but, when we come to the New Testament, we shall have occasion to speak of a second and more terrible captivity and dispersion, from which they have as yet never recovered.

### Ezra's Embassy to Babylon, and Return to Jerusalem, favored by King Artaxerxes

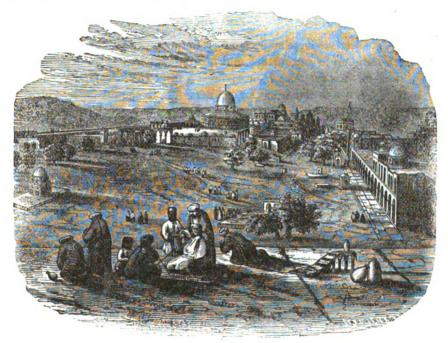
#### EZRA VII.

THIS chapter begins with an account of Ezra himself, tracing back his descent from Aaron the high priest. It appears that in the reign of Artaxerxes, or, as some suppose, the seventh year of the reign of Darius, whom they consider as the same king, Ezra went a second time from Babylon, having first gone there with Zerubbabel. He was a scribe, as we have before said. He was a well-instructed scribe, having carefully studied the law; and so he was well qualified to teach it to others. It is said that "the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him." What the request was is not stated, but without doubt, by his being again at Babylon, and making his applications there, he was employed as a sort of ambassador, to obtain royal assistance in carrying into complete effect all the decrees of Cyrus in favor of the Jews. God's favor was with him; and he prospered in his object. On his return, a great number of the children of Israel—perhaps some of the ten tribes which had been mingled with Judah and Benjamin-and also many of those who had to fill offices in the temple, finding it now finished, returned with him.

It is said that "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord." He learned the holy truth of God that he might "teach in Israel statutes and judgments;" that is, "the laws moral, ceremonial, and civil." By moral laws are meant those which relate to our duty to God and our neighbor—not to swear, break the Sabbath, lie, steal, and do other wicked things, but to love God and to love our neighbors, and to try and do them good. By ceremonial laws are intended those which regulated all the customs of Jewish worship. And by civil laws are pointed out those which regulate our conduct in society towards each other, especially as citizens, watching over each other's interests as a body of people, and behaving orderly in our connection with mankind around us.

Such a man as Ezra, who learned, and did, and taught these laws, was

indeed a blessing to his nation. To show how God approved of him, he gave him the greatest success at the court of Babylon; for the king wrote a letter granting him a number of favors for his people, and giving him very great power. He wrote a letter which, you will observe, begins, "Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest." This title supremely, or above all, belongs to Jesus Christ, who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." It was, however, neither a profane nor a false title, as used by Artaxerxes, for he was king over other kings, who having been conquered by his people, were tributary to him, and held their crowns at his pleasure. In this letter, the king granted permission to all the Jews which yet remained



JERUSALEM REBUILT.

at Babylon to go to Jerusalem. He also authorized him to inquire into all the behavior of the Jews at Jerusalem, and to see if it was such as the law of his God required. He likewise, with his nobles, gave him rich presents, and he granted him leave to collect gifts of gold and silver, and to take them to Jerusalem in aid of the temple; particularly to buy beasts for the purpose of offering them up to God according to the law. The king also

ordered the ministers of the holy religion to be free from all taxes; and he authorized Ezra to appoint wise and just magistrates to govern the people, and to punish those that broke the laws.

When Ezra thought of this kindness of the king, he blessed God, and owned that it was he who put it into the king's heart. And Ezra gladly undertook to fulfil all his commission, and for this purpose went to Jerusalem, accompanied by many chief men of Israel, whom he now persuaded to accompany him.

## Ezra forwards the Work of God at Jerusalem.

EZRA VIII.

In this chapter we have an account of those Jews that accompanied Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem; and how he gathered them together, procured ministers for the temple, proclaimed a fast to ask for God's protection, as he would not ask the king for soldiers, lest it should show a want of confidence in God, and so dishonor him before the heathen: and then how he divided amongst them the treasures he had procured for the temple services, the whole of which a learned writer reckons to have been worth six million ninety-three thousand dollars; and some reckon it at double that amount. Then they left the river Ahava, where they had assembled, went to Jerusalem, took a particular account of the treasure, and "offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel," and "they furthered the people and the house of God," adding to the comfort of the former and to the beauty of the latter.

## Judah's Sinful Alliances, and general Reformation.

EZRA IX., X.

WE have more than once said that God had commanded the Israelites not to marry the people of other lands, which were all heathen, and therefore served false gods. The reason of this we also think we have before mentioned to you—it was, lest they should be seduced by such marriages to forsake God, and to become the worshippers of idols.

When Ezra had settled all that we have seen about the temple, some of the pious princes went to him in great grief, and lamented that this people had acted in a very ungrateful manner towards God, and instead of serving EZRA. 465

him more faithfully, united themselves with idolaters, "doing according to their abominations." Widowers had even married Canaanitsh and other heathen wives, and sanctioned the same marriages among their sons; not only so, but some of the princes and rulers, who, from their higher rank, ought to have set a better example, had been guilty of the like offence against God's laws.

When Ezra heard these things, he rent his clothes, plucked off the hair of his head and beard, and sat down silent on the ground. These were all

customs among the Jews expressive of the greatest grief. While Ezra thus grieved, a number of pious men gathered themselves around him; and at the time of the evening sacrifice, Ezra rose up, fell upon his knees, and lamented the sins of the people, and then left himself and them in the hands of God as a God of mercy.

Seeing his excessive grief, great numbers had now gathered around him, and while he wept they also wept—men, women,



READING OF THE LAW UNDER EZRA.

and children. At length, one whose name was Shecaniah acknowledged the guilt of the people, and expressed a hope that they would do the evil complained of no more. He, therefore, advised that all the strange wives, which had been taken against the command of God, should be put away; and the chief priests, Levites, and all Israel, swore it should be done as Shecaniah and Ezra had proposed.

Within three days after this, all Judah and Benjamin assembled, being called together,—and Ezra told them how they had sinned against God, and entreated them to put away their heathen wives. And they all said they would do so.

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Proper inquiry was then made about all their marriages, and in three months the examination was finished.

It was found that all classes had some who were guilty; and that, in all, about one hundred and thirteen had married heathen women.



EZRA'S TOMB

Thus was this reformation effected. Those who did not approve of it had no choice but to be "separated from the congregation;" that is, they were not allowed to worship God in his temple, and were to be cut off from the people, and be left without the hope of true Israel-

ites. Thus, my dear readers, we have no choice between serving sin and serving God. If we continue to serve sin, we must be forever cut off from his favor; but if we forsake sin and serve him, he is full of grace and mercy, and will not forsake us. When God makes conditions to us, there is nothing left but the most perfect and ready obedience. He is unchangeable in all his plans and purposes, both in respect to his general government among men, and his dealings with individuals; and it will not do for us to cling to the things that we particularly love, and yet look for favor from God by serving him in other things. The laws of God are only kept, and the mercy and favor of God are only obtained, by a full and unqualified acceptance of all and every condition he makes. Let us then humbly, and with hearts full of worship, bow to the will of God as we understand it, and be ready to make any and every sacrifice to honor him who alone is able to honor us throughout eternity, and make us co-heirs with him who first loved us, and gave himself for us.



BUING OF TOMBS BUILT IN TIME OF EERA.

# NEHEMIAH:

So called from the supposed author of it, who really seems, from plain testimony and the simplest rules of criticism, to be its writer. The major part of the book records Nehemiah's twelve years' administration in Jerusalem, followed by his return to Shushan, and eventually his new and energetic reforms after his return. This book has thirteen chapters, and closes up the history of the Old Testament, at the death of its writer, about four hundred and six years before the appearance of Jesus, our Lord.

# Nehemiah's Affliction at the State of Jerusalem.—The Determined Conduct of Nehemiah.

#### NEHEMIAH I.-IV.

HIS book begins with the state of the Jews at Jerusalem about ten years after the period mentioned in the Book of Ezra, and in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. God so ordered matters that at this time some Jews had occasion to go to Shushan, or Susa, an ancient city in which was the winter palace of the kings of Persia. Nehemiah, a pious Jew, happened to be the king's cupbearer, which was a place of great honor, and gave him an opportunity of being frequently in the king's presence, and that at a time when

his heart was cheerful, and he was disposed to be kind and good-natured. This good man having inquired of his brethren, the Jews, how things were going on at Jerusalem, was grieved to learn that the people were "in great affliction and reproach," and that the wall of the city was still "broken down," and the gates were "burned with fire," as the Babylonians had left them.

Then Nehemiah was very sorry, and he "wept and mourned" for the sins of his country, which had been the cause of all its suffering; and he "fasted and prayed before the God of heaven," beseeching him in behalf of his people, and that he might find favor with the king, in trying to do something for their good.

At length, when he was waiting on the king, as he did not usually look

dull,—for good men ought to look happy,—the king wondered to see him so dejected. And he told him he had great cause to be sad, for he had learned that the chief city of his beloved country was still in ruins. the king wished to know what he could do for him; Nehemiah paused a moment and prayed to God, perhaps thanking him for the favor he had already found with the king, and perhaps, also, asking God for wisdom to give a right answer. Then he asked the king to let him go to Jerusalem, and restore it from its ruins. And the king gave him leave to go, and allowed him to fix his own time for staying. He next asked the king for letters to the governors of the country through which he should pass, that he might meet with every help from them in proceeding on his journey; and also for a letter to the keeper of the king's forest, that he might obtain from him any quantity of timber that might be necessary, for the workmen to use in rebuilding what was broken down. This, too, the king granted. Nehemiah sees all his success as coming from God, and he says, "the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me."

Nehemiah now set off, accompanied with a guard of honor from the king, to protect him all the way till he reached Jerusalem.

Nehemiah thought it prudent to make no bustle about what he was going to do, lest he should be opposed in his work. So he went in the night time, and looked all over the ruins of the city. And when he had seen what ought to be done, and laid his plans, he called together the chief men of the Jews, and he advised them to build up the wall which surrounded the city; and he told them of God's goodness to him, and of his success with the king. They were so much delighted at this news, that they agreed at once to set to work and build, and encouraged one another in the undertaking.

Then Sanballat, who was a Moabite, and a governor of the Samaritans, and Tobiah, an Ammonite, who had been raised from a slave, and who was now a governor as well as Sanballat, and Geshem, who was, most likely, an Arab chief—tried all in their power to frighten the Jews, that they might not go on with their work. But Nehemiah knew what he was about, and he told them he was sure God would prosper his countrymen, and therefore they should certainly build; and as for those who opposed them, they had no right to meddle with the affairs of Jerusalem, and would do better to mind their own business.

As soon as it was decided that the city should all be built up, every man took his share in the work, the priests first setting the example by building

the sheep gate, which was most likely the gate through which the sheep were brought that were to be sacrificed in the temple. And in addition to the priests, tradesmen and workmen of all sorts helped to build the walls. Even the rulers united in this work, and probably not only by giving their gold and silver, but also their labor. The nobles of Tekoa were, indeed, exceptions, whose names are mentioned with disgrace, because "they put not their necks to the work of the Lord"—meaning, that the ox works by drawing with his yoke on his neck, but they would have no yoke; or, in

other words, they refused in any way to afford aid, and did not care at all about their city. The daughters of Shallum, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, were also among those that assisted.

While this work was going on, Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, was much mortified, and tried to stir up the army which he commanded; and he said, "What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day?"—meaning, perhaps, that unless they made very great haste indeed, they would find



ONE OF THE GATES REPAIRED BY NEHEMIAH.

that a stop should be put to their work. "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" And Tobiah, the Ammonite, joined him, and laughed at the idea of the Jews being able again to build up their wall with such rubbish as they had got: "Why," said he, "if a fox go up, it shall even break down their stone wall,"—it will not bear his weight.

This came to the ears of Nehemiah, who felt for the honor of his God; and he was grieved, and prayed to God to take notice of his adversaries, leaving it in his hands to do as he in his wisdom and justice should think right.

In the meantime the Jews proceeded so rapidly, that they soon carried up the wall all round the city, to half its proper height. Sanballat and his companions now found that while they were mocking the Jews were working, and when they had learned that they had really built so much, their sneerings were turned into rage: "they were very wroth." Then they "conspired all of them together, to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."

Nehemiah, however, still went on with the work, and while his adversaries threatened he prayed. He met the increasing appearances of danger with increasing caution. He placed people with swords, spears, and bows behind the lower walls, which might be attempted before they were raised to their proper height; and he also put men on the higher places or towers, to have the greater command of the enemy, and then he encouraged the people by an animating speech. "Be ye not afraid of them," said he, "remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." However, when the adversaries saw that the Jews were aware of their intentions, they gave up the contest.

Nevertheless Nehemiah did not give up his caution, for he knew that he had a bitter and a subtle foe to deal with. Some men were still kept ready for any conflict, and all worked with one hand, and held a weapon with the other, or at least had it close at hand, or girt about them; and some of the more weighty weapons were committed to the care of others near at hand—the spears, the shields, the bows, and the habergeons, or breast-plates, or coats of mail. Nehemiah also appointed a trumpeter to stand by him, and if he should see any danger, or hear any alarm—as the workmen were divided a great way from each other, all around the city—this trumpeter could blow his trumpet, and call them all to the place where their help was needed. He also ordered all the people to continue in Jerusalem to guard it by night, as well as to work by day. Thus they went on with the work, and that they might be ready to meet any attack, they never even pulled off their clothes, except when it was necessary to send them to be washed.

Through the watchfulness and patient care of Nehemiah were the labors of the Jews not only successful, but they were divinely led and guarded through the exercise of prayer and faith on the part of their leader. This same watchfulness and patient care, accompanied by prayer, must mark the Christian's experience at the present day. There is enmity, subtleness, and temptation, ever active and present, at almost every turn in life.

# Nehemiah's noble Conduct towards the oppressed Jews.

#### NEHEMIAH V.

WHILE Nehemiah was going on in his great work, many of the people, seeing his zeal for the good of his country, and relying on his wisdom and piety, flocked to him to make their complaints against their rich brethren of the Jews. These people had large families, and they were obliged to provide them with bread to keep them from starving. As there was a scarcity of corn, the rich had taken advantage of it to charge very high for what they had in their possession; and when the poorer people had no more money left to pay for it, they obliged them to mortgage their lands, vineyards, and houses.

These people had also other heavy expenses, owing to a tax which they had to pay the Persian king, under whose authority they now were, and some had mortgaged their lands and vineyards to help them to pay this tax.

But even this was not the worst part of their distress. For the law permitting Jewish parents to sell their children in times of great necessity, they had been obliged to do so, though they loved them as well as the rich loved theirs, and though they had a right to enjoy the same privileges which they enjoyed, as a peculiar nation. Nor had they any hope of ever recovering them, as their lands and vineyards were not now in their hands to purchase their deliverance.

Then Nehemiah "was very angry," as we may be at sin; for the rich men, by oppressing the poor, and exacting usury—that is, a greater profit for the lending of their money than they ought to have had—had not only been cruel to their poor brethren, but had broken God's law, which forbade such conduct. And he rebuked the rich men; and he had them gathered together before a number of their countrymen; and he said to them, that he and his brethren in the Persian court had done all in their power to redeem any of their brethren who were sold to the heathen around them, in order that they might be restored again to their country, and would they now be so cruel to their own brethren? And must he, Nehemiah, and his companions, be obliged to pay them, to redeem their own countrymen and women?

To this they could answer nothing, for they felt ashamed. "I pray you, then," said Nehemiah, "let us leave off this usury." Then he urged them to restore the lands, vineyards, olive-yards, and houses, and as much of the

people's money as they had unjustly taken from them. So powerful are good words, connected with a good example, that the rich Jews could not help doing as Nehemiah desired; and then he called the priests to take the oaths of these men that they would keep their promise. After this, he shook his lap, according to an Eastern custom—that is, he took up the fore-skirts of his garments, and shaking the dust out of them, as a symbol, or sign, he said, "So God shake every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not his promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise."

It is thought that Nehemiah remained a short time only at Jerusalem, till the building of the wall was completed, and some other things were arranged; and that, as he had asked permission from the king of Persia to be absent but for a short time, he therefore returned, and kept his word. When the king heard about what he had done, and the state of the people, it is supposed that he sent Nehemiah back again, with full authority to be their governor. For in this chapter he says, that he was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year, even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is twelve years; and that, during that time, neither he nor his brethren had ever eaten the bread of the governor. The table of the governor was always supplied by the people with bread and wine, and besides, he had a daily allowance in money; but Nehemiah neither took salary nor bread. Nor did either he or his people make any profit by purchasing the lands of the distressed poor. And as for doing the work of the wall, his own servants labored as much as any others, but no charge was made for it. In addition to this liberality, Nehemiah kept a good table, which was open to a hundred and fifty guests, but he made no charge, "because the bondage was heavy upon the people." For all this he looked for reward from God only, not as if he had done anything that could merit God's favor; but as God condescends to approve of what we do honestly in his sight, Nehemiah prayed, "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people."

Thus we see in Nehemiah a most illustrious reformer and ruler; one who not only obtained honor in Babylon because of his wonderful attainments and high character; but who readily secured the confidence and love of his people while governor in Jerusalem, because of his great qualities of mind, and his noble faith in and dependence upon God. The acts of such a man always afford delightful subject for contemplation and profit.

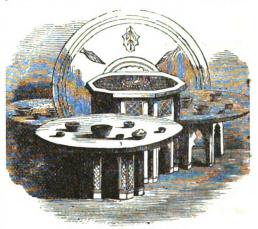
# Artifices of Sanballat and his Accomplices to ruin Nehemiah.

#### NEHEMIAH VI.

WHEN Sanballat and his party heard that the wall of Jerusalem was completed, though, indeed, the gates of the city were not yet put up, they sent to Nehemiah, and invited him to meet them on a neighboring plain, supposing, no doubt, that he would be ready to go, with a design to be reconciled to them. But this was not their design; and Nehemiah was either informed of their wicked plots, or God impressed his mind with a sufficient warning. So Nehemiah sent a civil answer, without giving any reason why he would not go. His answer was, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it.

and come down to you?" So he would not go down from the eminence on which Jerusalem stood, and expose himself to his treacherous enemies in the plain.

No less than four times did Sanballat and his companions contrive various methods to get Nehemiah to meet them, but he very wisely continued to give them similar answers. At last Sanballat sent his servant with au open letter to him, which every one might read, and in



TABLES IN TIME OF NEHEMIAH.

which he told him that there was a report abroad that he was guilty of treason. This was the very way in which to spread such a report, and effect what he wanted—the ruin of good Nehemiah. Besides, this was a gross insult to a man of Nehemiah's rank, as letters sent to great men in the East are always carefully folded up, and put into a handsome silk bag, and then the bag is carefully sealed. Nehemiah flatly replied to this message that it was false, and that the whole was the invention of Sanballat himself.

Sanballat was not yet tired of doing mischief, so he thought of other schemes to accomplish his purpose.

One Shemaiah, supposed to have been a priest, pretended great friendship

to Nehemiah, and tried to persuade him to flee to some place of safety, that he might hide from his enemies; for, as they were so persevering, they would be sure to take him at last, and kill him. But Nehemiah replied, "Should such a man as I flee?" He was the king's agent, he was the leader of all the work, and if he fled the people would stop the work and flee too; the enemy would then, most certainly, enter by the open gates, and Sanballat would assume the authority, and he and the Jews be involved in complete destruction. Nehemiah, indeed, perceived that God had not sent this man to save him from any danger; God gave him wisdom to see that there was some artful design hid under his seeming friendship; and so it rurned out, for lo, the crafty Sanballat had hired him!

In the midst of such difficulties as these the wall was at last completed. So diligent were Nehemiah and the Jews, that the whole labor occupied only fifty-two days. Sanballat and the other adversaries were now ashamed and vexed, that all their efforts had been useless to prevent the work; but who can hinder what God designs to be done? And God was with Nehemiah to give him wisdom and courage, and to bless him.

## Nehemiah's wise Measures to protect Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH VII., VIII.

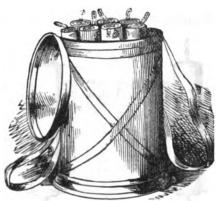
THIS chapter is supposed to relate to what Nehemiah did just before he returned to the Persian court, and so before he was appointed governor of the people. He made Hanini, the person who first told him of the sad state of Jerusalem, and Hananiah, rulers during his absence. Some seem to think that both these names mean but one person, who is described as "a faithful man," and one that "feared God above many."

He also ordered that the gates of Jerusalem should be kept shut every morning, till the sun became hot; that is, till it was likely there were plenty of people risen to defend the city from any attempts to enter it by the gates. A similar custom is still to be found among the inhabitants in the parts of the world about Judea; for travellers inform us, that if a traveller arrives after sunset he finds the gates shut, and on no consideration will they open them till the next morning, so that those who come late are obliged to lodge in the plain. Nehemiah further desired that care should be taken to see that the gates were kept closed, and that proper persons should be always on the watch to prevent surprise from their enemies.

Jerusalem had not yet recovered its inhabitants. The city was still as large as it was when it was full of people, but the people who returned from the captivity in Babylon had not all taken up their abode there, "and the houses were not builded." The number that came out of captivity with Zerubbabel did indeed amount to forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, and many more came with Ezra. Yet a great number chose to settle in the towns and cities in the country, Jerusalem being in such a desolate condition. So Nehemiah says, "My God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of them which came up at

the first, and found written therein, These are the children of the promise, that went out of the captivity." This register directed Nehemiah to find out to what city each family formerly belonged, and who to the city of Jerusalem, "that they might be called upon to come and rebuild their houses, and take up their residence there."

Nehemiah then gives an account of the children of the province of Judea as it was now reduced, who came out of the captivity of Babylon through the decree of Cyrus. He also tells us



MATERIALS USED IN WRITING THE LAW.

of the liberality of those who subscribed well for rebuilding the city and the temple; and he concludes by informing us that in a short time the children of Israel got all fixed in their own cities.

And now we read of a grand assembly of the people, which took place in the open street, because, probably, there was no place large enough to hold them; and that there, Ezra, at the request of the people, read the law of the Lord aloud, "from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." This was a most serious meeting. The people all stood up to show respect, "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God," who had given them his holy law, "and all the people answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord, with their faces to the ground."

There were many others who stood by the side of Ezra, and who most

likely sometimes helped him by reading a few portions while he rested; for reading so long in the open air, to so great a number of people, must have fatigued him very much. These also as well as Ezra explained such parts as the people could not easily understand.

The people were so much affected that they all wept when they heard the words of the law, remembering how much they had broken it. And Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, or governor, "and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not nor weep." It seems that this meeting was kept on the feast of trumpets, which was on the first day of the Jews' seventh month; and as that was usually a day of joy, it was not keeping it aright to show sadness. So Nehemiah said unto them, "Go



your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." So all the people did as they were ordered to do, and were happy.

On the second day the chiefs of the fathers, or heads of the families and tribes, made further inquiries of Ezra about the meaning of many parts of the law. "And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the

children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written;" that is, as it is written in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus and the fortieth verse.

You will recollect, my dear young reader, that all this was ordered to be done for the purpose of keeping the *Feast of Tabernacles*, which was held to keep in remembrance the travelling life of the Israelites in the wilderness, after they had been delivered from Egyptian slavery. Now, having been delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and the proper time of the year occurring, it was their special duty to keep the same feast.

So the people fetched the boughs, "and made themselves booths, every

one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water-gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths," during the seven days that the feast lasted, to remind them how their fathers dwelt in booths in the wilderness. Indeed, since the days of Jeshua, or Joshua, "the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so." Joshua observed the feast when he had brought and settled the people of Israel in the land of Canaan; and it had been observed since, but no Feast of Tabernacles had been so heartily and so piously celebrated.

# A solemn Fast of the Jews.—The People make a Covenant to serve God. Nehemiah ix.—xi.

AFTER the Feast of Tabernacles was over, the people had a general fast, and spent six hours in hearing the law read to them, and in humbly confessing their sins before God. The ninth chapter chiefly consists of a solemn prayer which was offered up by the Levites on this occasion. In this prayer they called to remembrance all the dealings of God with them as a nation for ages past, acknowledged their faults, owned that God was righteous, and resolved on serving him with all their hearts, for the time to come.

For this purpose, they had a solemn covenant, or agreement, drawn up, in which they promised that they would never again marry the heathen; that they would keep holy the Sabbath-day; and that they would provide for the continuance and support of God's ministers and ordinances among them. A few signed and sealed this agreement for the rest, for it would have been a very difficult thing to have managed it otherwise for so large a number of people.

Jerusalem was as yet, as you have been told, but thinly inhabited, for though it had many inhabitants, they were spread over a large space. The city, though walled round, was weak and despicable, having but few defenders, compared with its size. Nehemiah, therefore, next proceeded to take steps for filling it with inhabitants, and so adding to its strength. For this purpose, he obliged one out of every ten of the country people to take up his abode there; and that there might be no partiality shown, in favoring any who might find it more convenient to live where they had

already got comfortable houses, he advised that every ten should cast lots, and he on whom the lot fell should go and live at Jerusalem. Some, indeed, went there of their own accord; and as it was then a place with but few advantages, and exposed to great dangers, the inhabitants blessed and prayed for them, for showing so much love to their poor city.

# The Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem.—Nehemiah completes the Reform of the Jews.

NEHEMIAH XII., XIII.

THE chief thing contained in the twelfth chapter is the account of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.

The wall having been built, the princes, priests, and people were all gathered together, to express their joy at its completion, and to thank God. This was the most sure way of securing its protection and defence in all future dangers. Then they all walked round it in two companies, singing psalms and sounding trumpets, and other musical instruments, in different ways, one taking the right, and the other the left, till at last they met again at one point. The walls being thick, the princes and priests, with the singers, could walk comfortably upon them; and it is probable that the people walked round below, some within the wall, and some without. All that day they offered great sacrifices; and not only were the men engaged, but also the women and children partook of the general joy. The hosannas of infants are not despised, when they offer them from their hearts to God.

Nehemiah having been called to the court of his royal master, was some time absent from Jerusalem; and on his return to see how things went on, he was greatly grieved to find that many wicked things had been done. Eliashib, the chief priest, having formed an alliance by marriage with Tobiah, the Ammonite, which was contrary to the law of God, and wishing to accommodate him in the city, had even given him a place in the sacred temple.

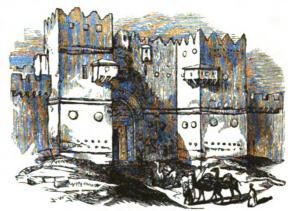
Nehemiah very speedily turned out everything belonging to this wicked Ammonite, and had the chamber well cleansed, as a sign of washing away its defilement from his footsteps.

Then he found out that the Levites had been neglected, and the people cared so little about religion, that not having provided for them, as God had commanded, they had all left the city, and gone into the fields to work

for themselves. He also soon remedied this evil, and brought back the Levites, and made the people bring their tithes of corn, wine, and oil, into their treasuries.

There being no regard paid to religion, the holy Sabbath was shamefully abused. God had commanded it to be kept as a holy day, and that no manner of work should be done in it; but on that day they worked their wine-presses, to squeeze out the juice of the grapes for the purpose of making wine; and they carried their corn, and loaded their asses, and traded with the men of Tyre, who were a sort of peddlers, having many wares to sell. Nehemiah reproved all this sin, and especially the nobles, who ought to have used their authority to prevent it; and he reminded them that because their fathers had sinned in the like way, they, their children, had so long been suffering, and that this was like asking God to punish them again for their iniquity. To prevent any more trading on the

Sabbath, he ordered the gates of Jerusalem to be shut from the evening before the Sabbath till the morning after; and, as he could not trust the faithless men who had been porters at the gates, he set his own people to keep them, that no one should enter the city on the Sabbath with any merchandise about him. The Tyrian traders did



EASTERN GATE OF JERUSALEM.

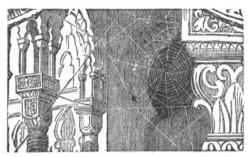
not like to be balked in their dealings, and lounged about outside the walls, on the Sabbath day, hoping to entice some of the people to go out of the city, and to deal with them. However, Nehemiah was as sharp as they; and seeing what they were about, he told them, "if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you!" and this frightened them so, that they did not come any more on the Sabbath.

A great many of the Jews had also married strange wives "of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab," and their children, instead of understanding their language, to be able to learn the law of God, were only fit for heathen, and knew but the languages of their heathen mothers and nurses, which

they had taught them. So these Jews would be the fathers of idolaters. With these men Nehemiah also contended, when they tried to excuse themselves. And he "cursed them;" that is, he denounced the judgments which God had spoken against them; and "he smote certain of them," or ordered them to be beaten, according to the law; and he plucked off their hair to shame them, as they had no shame in sinning thus openly against God. He also obliged them to swear that, for the time to come, they would never more suffer any such marriages to take place.

Nehemiah, likewise, found out that a branch of the high priest's own family—one of his grandsons—had married a daughter of Sanballat, that notorious enemy of the Jews. How little love had that man either to God or his country, who could make himself, in duty and interest, a friend to him that was a sworn enemy to both! It seems this young priest would not put away his wife, and therefore Nehemiah chased him from him—deprived him, degraded him, and made him forever incapable of the priesthood.

Thus did Nehemiah reform and benefit his countrymen the Jews, and aim to promote the honor and glory of his God; looking only for his reward in heaven. This is what he meant when he so often prayed, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this." For God does not forget what we do for his glory, though it is our duty to do it, though what we can do is but little, and though he has no need of our services for his own benefit, but all the benefit belongs to ourselves.



TEMPLE CHAPITERS.

# ESTHER:

Named after a Jewish captive, who was exalted to the station of queen of Persia, and was thus made the instrument of saving the lives of her countrymen. Different opinions are held as to the authorship of this book; some ascribing it to Exra, some to Nehemiah, and some to Mordeoni. The most and best of authorities seem to incline towards the last-named person, as the writer. It gives us a record of the peculiar care that Divine Providence has exercised over his chosen people, and thus encourages the church and Christians in all ages to depend upon the help and favor of Him to whom they, especially, belong. The historical nature of the book is beyond dispute, whilst the strong internal evidences of its inspired nature readily reped and cast aside all doubt in regard to it.

## The Royal Feast of King Ahasuerus.

ESTHER L.

HE wonderful history which we have in this book is of events which happened in the time of Ezra; and Ahasuerus, the king mentioned, is by some supposed to have been Xerxes, the renowned Persian conqueror. Ahasuerus being a common name given by ancient authors to Persian kings, the Scripture has not particularly indicated which king of them it was; it is enough, however, for the interesting parts of this history to know that

these incidents happened in the reign of a Persian king.

We here learn that this prince reigned over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, or large tracts of country, managed by different governors.

Ahasuerus had a palace in Shushan, the chief Persian city. In the third year of his reign he made a grand feast for all the nobles and princes who governed his hundred and twenty-seven provinces. This feast lasted "a hundred and fourscore," that is, a hundred and eighty days; and, after it was over, he gave a feast to all the attendants in his palace, which lasted seven days.

It is said that it is still the custom in Persia to keep a yearly feast for 31

the same time; for in that country the manners and customs of the people have not changed as they have with us. It is supposed that in this second feast many thousands were entertained, so splendid and expensive are the feasts of the rich Persians.

In the Eastern countries the women never mingle with the men, as they



A ROYAL FEAST.

do with us; hence the queen, Vashti—or beautiful, which Vashti means—and the ladies, had a grand feast by themselves, at the same time also, in the royal house.

After the feast had lasted seven days, Ahasuerus was talking with his nobles about the beauty of his queen; and that he might convince them how handsome she was, he sent some of his officers to fetch Vashti and show her to the company. Vashti was either too proud to allow herself to be shown before a set of nobles and strangers, who perhaps were scarcely sober—or, very likely, she was so modest that she would rather run the risk of displeasing the king, than join for a moment such a large company of wine-drinkers, all being men.

On being told that the queen would not come, the king was in a great rage. So he directly consulted his wise men, or counsellors, that knew the laws, and asked what he should do with Vashti for not obeying his commands. One of them, named Memucan, said, that the queen had not only insulted the king, but had set a bad example to the ladies of the whole

kingdom, who, if Vashti were not punished, would never mind what their husbands wished them to do. He therefore thought that the king should separate himself from Vashti forever, and choose another queen. This Memucan then advised the king to write a decree to that purport, and to send it all over the kingdom. Now, when the king had written a law, according to the custom of the Medes and Persians, he could not alter it, and so, when he had done this, Vashti could never again be queen. This is thought to have been very cunning advice in Memucan, for if the king had not made the decree, he might have restored Vashti to favor, and then she would have punished her enemies for trying to deprive her of her dignity. "And the saying pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan."

# Esther made Queen of Persia.—Plot against the King.

### ESTHER II.

WHEN king Ahasuerus got sober, and his anger no longer raged, he began to think how foolish he had been to be offended with his queen. And he "remembered Vashti," and how much he loved her, and "what she had done"—only having committed a small offence, if any offence at all—"and what was decreed against her"—that she should lose her rank, and that without hope of recovery.

In order to soothe the king's mind, and take away his thoughts from Vashti, his counsellors advised him to appoint officers all over the kingdom to look out all the beautiful women they could find, and to send them to one of the king's chief officers, called his chamberlain; and he should take care that they should be properly perfumed and dressed fit to see a king of the East; and then the one that the king liked best should be his queen.

At this time God's providence so ordered it that there happened to be "a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai," residing in the king's palace at Shushan. He was a great-grandson of Kish, one of those whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive into Babylon. "And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother; and the maid was fair and beautiful, whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter." Hadassah was the original name of this Jewess, and means myrtle; and Esther was her Persian name, signifying a star, because she was a shining beauty.

When Hegai, the keeper of the women, saw this Jewess, he was pleased with her; and so, indeed, were all who saw her; not only because she was beautiful, but because she was contented and happy, and "required nothing but what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed." Esther, however, took care not to say she was a Jewess, for her uncle Mordecai advised her to keep that a secret, lest she should be despised for it.

After the ceremony of twelve months' preparation, the king saw all the women that had been gathered from different parts of the kingdom, and "the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins," or unmarried women; "so that he set the royal crown upon her head," and made her queen instead of Vashti. And "then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and servants, even Esther's feast;" which some think lasted as long as a month; "and he made a release to the provinces," that is, he would not take the taxes which the conquered provinces owed him up to the time; "and gave gifts according to the state of the king," or suitable to his grandeur, Esther sharing of them largely, as Eastern queens usually did.

Mordecai got now to be appointed one of the officers in the service of the king, which he probably obtained through Esther, though she had not yet explained her relationship to him. While he was performing his duties, he found out that Bigthan and Teresh, two officers who kept the door of the king's bedchamber, had laid a plan to kill Ahasuerus, with whom they were angry for something he had done to them. Mordecai, like a faithful servant, immediately let Esther know of the scheme, and Esther directly told it to the king, and informed him how she knew about it through Mordecai. So inquiry being instantly made, the whole plot was discovered, and the two chamberlains where hanged, after which an account of the traitors, and of their discovery and execution, was written in a book of the history of the country, which was kept for the use of the king.

# Haman's Exaltation, and Plan to destroy the Jews.

#### ESTHER III.

AFTER the marriage of Esther, and the discovery of the conspiracy against Ahasuerus, the king promoted "Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes

that were with him." This man was, therefore, a very great favorite at court; for it was the custom of the kings of Persia to advance those to the highest seats they thought best deserved it. And all the king's servants "bowed and reverenced Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him: but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." It is thought by some that this reverence was more than that respect which one person pays to another, and especially which the lower ranks pay to those above them; and that Haman was honored with a sort of adoration which ought alone to be given to God. Had it been mere respect that he wanted, Mordecai would certainly not have been so destitute of common decorum as not to have paid

it to him at the command of the king; but if he wanted honors which ought to be given to God only, Mordecai, as a devout Jew, would not be guilty of such base idolatry.

The other servants of the king took notice of the conduct of Mordecai, and talked to him about it; and at last they told Haman, that he might take particular notice of him, and especially as Mordecai was a Jew, and the more likely to excite his displeasure by his disobedience.



PERSIAN KING AND ATTENDANTS.

Mordecai had, indeed, told them of what race he was, probably as a reason why he did not act as they did.

When Haman saw how Mordecai behaved, he was "full of wrath;" but as it was beneath his dignity to notice the insult of such a person, he resolved on taking a dreadful vengeance on all the Jewish people in Persia.

Having determined the time for executing his plan, Haman complained to the king that there was a certain people spread all about the provinces, who disobeyed the king's laws, and that it was dangerous to allow them to live. He therefore advised that the king should decree their destruction; and to make up for the loss of so many people who paid him tribute, he,

Haman, was willing to pay a large sum out of his own purse. This man must have made great riches at court, for the sum he offered to pay was "ten thousand talents of silver," or sixteen million six hundred thousand dollars of our money! It is, however, probable that he reckoned on having a large portion of the spoil of the Jews, notwithstanding that all the murderers were allowed to share it among them, according to the decree which the king now issued. Haman was so great a favorite with the king that he absolutely refused to take his money, and he granted all he desired to the fullest extent.

So on the thirteenth day of the first month, Haman called together all the king's scribes or secretaries, and ordered them to write letters to the officers and governors of all the provinces, in the characters and languages of their different nations, and these letters were signed and sealed with the king's ring. As soon as they were ready, they were sent by posts, or running-men, into all parts where the Jews were. The decree which they contained was of the most cruel kind. It gave orders that on one particular day—the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—they were "to destroy, to "kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women," "and to take the spoil of them for a prey." Heralds, or royal criers, were also appointed to proclaim the decree, that everybody might be ready to execute it, and share in the booty.

After these things were done, the king and Haman feasted together; the royal city was, however, only a scene of distress; for the Jews were numerous there, and their grief affected their friends and neighbors, who were more humane than Haman, and trembled at the thought of shedding so much innocent blood.

## Haman's Fall and Execution.

#### ESTHER IV.-VII.

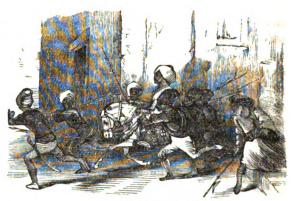
MORDECAI soon heard of the decree that was made against his people, and he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth and ashes, as signs of grief, and went out into the city and cried aloud. The Jews in all the provinces showed the same grief; they fasted, wept, wailed, and many even made sackcloth and ashes their beds.

That Esther might know what was going on, Mordecai placed himself at last before the king's gate; for he durst not go within the walls of the court in sackcloth and ashes. Here his habit and wailing attracted the notice of

some of the court, and came to the knowledge of Esther's maids, who told her of this singular appearance of Mordecai. The queen immediately sent him some fresh clothing to appear at court, when she might know more of the cause of his grief. Mordecai, however, refused the clothing. Esther then sent for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, who waited upon her

and desired him to go to Mordecai, and find out what was the matter. Mordecai told him all the particulars about Haman, and sent a copy of the decree to the queen, and charged her to lose no time in seeing the king, and asking for the preservation of their people, the Jews.

Now there was a law in Persia, which made it



TRAVELLING POST IN PERSIA.

death for any person to go in to the king without being sent for; this was to keep up his dignity, and to prevent any person from taking away his life. Esther, therefore, although queen of Persia, must run a great risk to venture into the king's presence without being sent for; and being now but coolly treated by the king, the hazard of incurring his displeasure was great. Esther therefore sent a message to Mordecai, that she had not been called in to the king for thirty days, and that she was afraid to venture as a petitioner before him.

Mordecai sent word in reply, that if her life was in danger by going in to the king uncalled for, it was more in danger by her not going. For the decree was made to destroy the Jewish nation, and as Haman perhaps would begin at the palace, even her life would not be spared, though she was queen. He also hoped that she was raised to the crown by Providence for the very purpose of saving her nation; but if she neglected to use her influence with the king, he felt persuaded that God would yet save the people, though she and her family, as a punishment for her indifference, might probably perish.

Esther then desired that Mordecai should gather together all the Jews that were in Shushan, and they should fast and pray for her three days and nights, while she and her maidens would fast also, and then she would venture before the king, though he might not send for her; and, said she, "If I perish, I perish; God's will be done." "So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him."

On the third day of the fast, when it was finished, Esther threw off her mourning dress and put on her royal robes, and she went and stood in the inner court of the king's house, where none were admitted uncalled for, on pain of death. The king was seated on his royal throne; and when he saw her, her modesty and beauty touched his heart; and he held out his golden sceptre, which was the sign that she might approach him, instead of being put to death for venturing into his presence. Esther touched the top of the sceptre, as a token of her obedience. The king then said very kindly to her, "What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee, to the half of the kingdom." Not that he would have given her half his kingdom, but he meant, "Anything that you want, I am sure I will most readily do for you: so do not be afraid to ask."

She then asked the king to come and partake of a banquet with her, and likewise to let Haman share the feast. She thought that would be the best way to lay her grievances before the king, and that she could then accuse Haman to his face, when he could have no time to prepare words for defence.

"So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared." And while he was drinking wine, he remembered his promise to the queen, and desired her to let him know what she wished him to do.

Esther was perhaps yet timid, or was trying to win upon the king sufficiently to allow her to attack his favorite, Haman, with success. She therefore still put off making her request, but begged the king to favor her once more with his presence, and she would on the next day prepare another banquet for him and Haman.

Haman went away quite delighted with his honors; but his proud heart was yet unhappy, because, as he passed the king's gate, Mordecai would not do him reverence. However, he said nothing to him, but treasured up his malice for a better opportunity. As soon as he got home he was full of joy at his good fortune at court, and he sent to invite his particular friends, and his wife and all his children, to tell them of his great prosperity. "And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants

of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet which she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king." But still, said he, "all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate;" how great soever my joy, in all my honors, I have a mortification that spoils all, and whenever I think of it, I cannot endure it; there is that Jew, Mordecai, who will not pay me homage as others do; I shall not be fully happy till he is put out of the way.

Now, you know, Haman might easily have put him out of the way, for he had got the king's decree passed against him and his people; but, by waiting for his supposed lucky day, he lost his present opportunity, and so Mordecai remained to humble his pride.

"Oh," said Zeresh his wife, and all his friends, "there is a very short way of finishing the matter with that Jew; get a very high gallows made, and then ask the king's leave to-morrow to hang Mordecai at once; and when that is done, you can go to the banquet free from all vexation." Haman liked the notion, and got the gallows made to hang Mordecai.

On the night before the banquet the king was very restless, and, being unable to sleep, he ordered the Chronicles, or notes of what happened in the kingdom, to be brought and read to him for his amusement. In those Chronicles, you remember, were entered the names of the conspirators against the king whom Mordecai had discovered, and the account of Mordecai's fidelity and of their treachery and execution. It happened that the courtiers fell in with this passage and read it. The king then asked if any reward had ever been bestowed upon Mordecai for his noble conduct in saving his life. The lords of his bed-chamber replied, that nothing had been done for him to raise him above his usual place.

The king was resolved that such conduct should no longer pass unsewarded, and asked his lords if any of his attendants were in the outward court, waiting to be called in. On going to see, they found Haman there, who had come as soon as he could, with a secret intention to obtain the king's leave to hang Mordecai. So the king desired him to enter. As soon as he had entered, the king said to him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, to whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself? he being the king's greatest favorite. So he very readily suggested honors which he thought he should enjoy. "And he said, let the royal apparel

be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hands of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

The king liked the proposal of Haman, and told him directly to do as he had proposed—to whom? Why to Mordecai, the Jew; to the very man whom he had come to court to get hanged!

Do you think that all this was chance? No; God ordered it all for the good of his favored people, the Jews. If Mordecai had not discovered the conspirators against the king—if the king's rest had not been disturbed—if he had not taken it into his head to have the Chronicles read to him, where Mordecai's good conduct was recorded—if Mordecai had been rewarded before—this remarkable honor would not have been bestowed upon Mordecai at all. So that it depended upon a chain of events all ordered by God's providence. And then, mark! the honor was granted him just at the moment when he was in the most danger, and when his life was about to be demanded by Haman, to whom the king would no doubt have granted it, having forgotten all about Mordecai's having saved his life from traitors. And what was yet more extraordinary, the man who was about to destroy him was the man who was made to load him with honors! So Mordecai lost nothing by faithfully serving God; neither will you lose at last by serving him. "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous."

Haman, having obeyed the king's command, and honored the man who would not worship him, went home bitterly mortified, being disappointed in his vengeance, and thinking himself degraded while Mordecai was exalted. Instead of repeating the story of his greatness, he now told his wife and friends of his misfortune, and they could not console him. They had probably heard how God had often done wonders in behalf of the Jews, and knowing Haman's rage against them, and his intentions towards them, they now saw that, already, ill success attended him; and they said, "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him."

While they were talking, the king's chamberlains came to attend Haman to the banquet, and, with a heavy heart, he hastened to join the king and queen.

While they were feasting, the king again asked Esther—which was the third time he had put the question—"What is thy petition, queen Esther, and it shall be granted thee? and what is thy request, and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom?" The queen then told him that sne asked for her life, and for the lives of all her nation under the king's dominion, for they were all devoted to destruction. She intimated that if they had been doomed to be slaves, they might quietly have submitted; but even then the king would have been greatly injured in his revenues by losing the benefit of the skill and industry of a nation laboring for its own welfare.

The king was startled at the news, and asked in a rage, "Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Now came the fearful moment for Haman: "And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman."

Haman was so terrified that he could not speak. The king, in the meanwhile, arose from his seat, and went out in haste to walk about the palace garden, for he would not sit where Haman was; and if he thought of the decree he had issued against the Jews, in which Esther was involved, he was

perhaps the more angry that Haman should coolly have drawn him into such a plot. As soon as the king was gone, Haman stood up before the queen, and humbly begged for his life, for he saw by the king's countenance that he determined to punish him. The king soon returned, and Haman, scarcely knowing what he did, had then thrown himself down upon the knees of the queen, to implore her mercy. An Eastern prince



PERSIAN DRESSES OF STATE.

can scarcely endure that any one should even look at his princess, much less touch her, which is considered a great liberty indeed; and when the king saw Haman before the queen, he never stopped in his rage to hear his petition, but instantly gave signs for his execution. The attendants obeyed his commands, covered his face, which is a sign that the person is condemned, and hurried him away. One of the king's chamberlains then

asked him how Haman should die; and he told him of the high gallows which he had prepared to hang the honored and faithful Mordecai. "Then the king said, Hang him thereon." In most Eastern countries, the king's command is the law, and the life and death of his subjects depend entirely on his pleasure; his word was enough, and Haman was executed.

#### Mordecai's Advancement.—Establishment of the Feast of Purim.

#### ESTHER VIII.-X.

THE same day on which Haman was executed, the king took all his property and gave it to Esther. He also gave Mordecai the ring which he had given to Haman, and which he used to wear as a proof of the king's favor. And Esther made Mordecai her steward, to manage the riches of Haman, which now became hers.

Though Haman was dead, the dreadful decree had yet gone out against the Jews to destroy them, and the laws of the Persians would not allow of its being revoked. Esther, however, ventured again into the presence of the king, fell down before him, and entreated him, even with tears, to prevent the mischief which Haman had "devised against the Jews." So the king ordered Mordecai to write another decree, after the manner in which Haman's was written, and to send it into the hundred and twenty-seven provinces over which he ruled. In this decree he gave the Jews leave to arm themselves, and if any attack them, by the permission of the former decree, they were to gather together in bodies, and stand for their lives, and the property of all those whom they defeated was to become theirs.

Mordecai made no delay, but sent off copies of the new decree, sealed with the king's ring; and posts on horseback, mules, camels, and young dromedaries, were despatched with them in every direction.

Mordecai was now promoted to great honor as the king's favorite. "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linerand purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad." Haman was, no doubt, a very austere man, not only to the Jews, but to others; and most likely got much of his wealth by his severity. All the people of Shushan were therefore glad to see his place occupied by so good a man as Mordecai; and "the Jews had light and gladness," that is, prosperity, "and joy, and honor." And in all places where the decree was sent, the

Jews kept a feast; "and many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them." They were made proselytes; that is, they, not being born Jews, submitted to all the rites of Jews, and united in their worship of the true God. Some might do this out of interest, hoping to gain the favors of the court, and of those who were its officers, as Esther and Mordecai were in such high favor with the king. Some might become Jews to save their lives, fearing that they might perish by their vengeance, when the new decree was acted upon. But we may hope and believe that not a few were struck with the clear proof of God's protecting providence over the nation; and so they desired to cast in their lot among them, and to have the Jews' God for their God.

As the day approached for the decree of Haman to be executed, the Jews, aware that they had many enemies, "gathered themselves together in their

cities, throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt." And instead of hurting them, "all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them." Mordecai being now chief minister of the king, they did not know how he might punish them, if they



MODERN PERSIAN WOMEN.

acted on Haman's decree; and the fame of the new minister was spread everywhere, and he increased daily in power.

Some of the Jews' enemies, however, would not let them alone, and the Jews slew them. In the city of Shushan they destroyed five hundred men, who were probably of Haman's party, and tried to avenge the death of that bad man. Among these were the ten sons of Haman. They did not, however, take their property, though the king's decree allowed it; and thus they showed that they were not moved by malice to kill their encmies, but only acted in defence of their own lives.

When the king learned that the Jews had killed five hundred in the city, he wished to know how many more of their enemies had fallen. And he asked the queen if she was now satisfied, or desired anything more. She

then asked that Haman's ten sons might be hanged upon the gallows on which their father was hung. It was usual among the Persians to hang criminals even after they were dead, that their bodies might be disgraced. This request of Esther's was not out of malice, but justice, to make an example of the wicked enemies of her country. Haman's sons had most likely been his counsellors in his wickedness, and had helped to forward his plans, and they had now shown their malice in fighting against the Jews.

By hanging them, as the last remainder of Haman's house, they would be a warning to others to take care in future how they tried to injure the people



SUPPOSED TOMB OF ESTHER AND MORDICAL

of God. The king granted this request to Esther, and the bodies of Haman's sons were hanged.

The next day, the Jews had another battle at Shushan, and slew three hundred more of their enemies. Those in the provinces "slew seventy and five thousand," but none of them took any of the property of those they slew.

Thus, having come off victorious, the Jews "had rest from their enemies." And some of them made the fourteenth, and some the fifteenth day of the month Adar, "a day of feasting and gladness;"

and they sent portions of the feast to each other, and especially to the poor, that they might share in all their enjoyments. So that the very day when their enemies thought to destroy them, they themselves were destroyed; and the Jews, instead of mourning and desolation, were the subjects of great joy.

Mordecai wished never to forget the goodness of God in preserving him and his people from such extreme danger; he therefore sent letters to all the Jews, desiring them to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar, in every year, in order to preserve in their memories the great goodness of God in saving them from the cruelty of Haman. We should never forget remarkable instances of God's goodness to us; and if we do not celebrate them with feasting, we should always remember the day in which they occurred with thanksgiving.

The Jews readily agreed to keep the proposed days; and as Haman had fixed upon the period by pur, that is, lot, "they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur." And they ordained that not only themselves, but their families, in every future generation, should keep this festival to commemorate the remarkable providence of God, in saving them from the hands of the wicked Haman. Esther and Mordecai also wrote letters to confirm this decree.

Nothing more is said of Mordecai, because this book was written only to show the care of God over his peculiar people. But there were many other interesting things about his greatness, as well as about the deeds of Ahasuerus, which were "written in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia," but which are now lost. How many old histories have perished, as the world itself must perish! The memorials of great empires are gone forever; but the Bible remains, the oldest, the best and the most interesting of books, giving a history of God's people, even from the beginning of time; and shall be an imperishable memorial of his spiritual dominion over the hearts of men, till all the subjects of his grace shall reign with him in glory.



A PRESIAN CUP-SEABLE

#### Job:

On, history of Job, the patriarch. This is divided into forty-two chapters, and tells us much that is useful and attractive in regard to a very ancient post-diluvian character, who seems as the connecting link, in God's church, between Noah and Abraham. Singular piety, afflictions, misfortunes, riches, and eventual pro-perity are all recorded in this very old and wonderful narrative, all which, with other important facts, are more or less given in the matters detidled below.



HE book which we have now to notice is called Job. It contains a short history of a good man of that name. He lived in the land of Uz, supposed to have been part of an Eastern country called Arabia. The time when he lived is not exactly known, but, from some circumstances, it is supposed that he was distantly related to Abraham, and a descendant of Nahor, his brother. As he lived to a good old age, it is thought that he was alive when

the Israelites were oppressed in Egypt, and that he maintained the pure worship of God in his country, when idolatry was everywhere else overspreading the world.

No one knows who wrote this book; some thinking that it was Ezra, some that it was Isaiah, some that it was Solomon, some that it was Moses, some that it was Elihu, and some that it was Job himself.

Some have also supposed that it is a parable, intended to set forth the afflictions to which a good man may be liable—the care of God over him—and the final deliverance which he shall at some time enjoy. Most who have written about him, however, agree in thinking that his history is no parable, but a history of a real person, because he is mentioned as such in Ezekiel and James.

The book begins with giving us Job's character; it is such as makes us at once interested in all that happens to him, for he "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil."—Not that he had no

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sin, but his conduct was as sincere as that of a man could be, and he did everything with the best intent; while those around him were idolaters, he served God, and while they lived in sinful practices, he eschewed or avoided evil.

This good man had seven sons and three daughters; he was also very rich, in what made the riches of those days, especially in his country: "His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East."

His children were very happy among themselves, and seemed to have loved each other, as good brothers and sisters ought, with a sincere affection. At particular times of the year they had feasts, as we usually have at

Christmas; and then they all met together, as many families do at least once a year with us, and the sisters were invited to meet with the brothers. Probably the brothers had these feasts in succession at their houses. And when they were over, good Job, who loved their souls as well as their bodies, lost no time in offering up "burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all; for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

From the circumstance of Job offering up the sacrifice, it is supposed with good reason, that he lived before the time of Moses, for only in the days of the patriarchs did good men act as the priests of their families; after that time,



JOB.

God appointed priests "both to offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." These sacrifices were types or representations of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and were no doubt offered up in faith, believing that, "in the fulness of time," the sacrifice which they represented would be offered up in the death of Christ; and that that sacrifice would make these of benefit, as they led the soul to rest alone upon it. These sacrifices were a confession of sin, and of the need of its being done away, in order that those who offered them might obtain pardon.

As at this time there were good men about Job, who agreed to call upon the name of the Lord, these "sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord." Satan, too, got into their assemblies, and suggested bad thoughts to their minds. Satan, however, does not merely mean the name of the bad spirit, but also signifies an accuser; and any evil people who found fault with the perfect Job, and said ill things of him-as they do now of those who fear God-and accused him of serving God for some selfish purposes, might well bear the name of Satan. Many, however, think that the evil spirit is here intended throughout, and, although we cannot tell how God and Satan could hold conversation, yet that it actually took place, between the good and evil spirits. It is enough for us, however, to know that Job was accused in that question, "Doth Job fear God for naught?"meaning, is he not a gainer by it? Does he not prosper? He may then well serve his God! "Hast thou not made a hedge about him?" that is, protected him-"and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." But only let his circumstances be changed, and see if he will serve God then. No, to be sure. "But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." So said the accuser.

In order to show that the religion of Job was genuine, and that he could serve God in a low estate as well as when surrounded by wealth, God allowed afflictions to come fast upon him. "And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were feasting and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house." And just in this happy moment, when Job must have been delighting himself in the happiness of his children, there came a messenger unto Job, and said, "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Here, in one moment, his "five hundred voke of oxen," and his "five hundred asses," which formed a valuable part of Job's substance, were all taken away. This sort of plundering was practised by these Sabeans, and in the East there are no greater plunderers to this day than the wild Arabs, who live in the parts near which Job resided. To add to Job's misfortunes, his servants also were slain, who, according to the customs of those times, became such by being born in his house, or bought with his money, and were therefore a part of his property.

This messenger had not done telling his sad story before another arrived; and he said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped

alone to tell thee." Thus were his "seven thousand sheep" at once destroyed by lightning, and he had neither food, nor wool for clothing.

Before this messenger had done speaking, another yet came from another part of Job's estates, where his camels were kept, and he said, "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I

only am escaped alone to tell thee." Thus Job lost all that he had, for now his "three thousand camels" were gone, being stolen by a people, who, as ancient history tells us, lived by plundering others.

Still the good man might have comforted himself that he was not left alone in his deep afflictions. He had his seven sons and his three daughters spared to him, and though his property was valuable, they were dearer to him than all, and children so affectionate towards each other would still comfort and support their venerable and beloved parent. while the last messenger was yet speaking, "there came also another and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness and



smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." There are very strong winds in Arabia, and God now suffered these to blow upon the house in which Job's sons were, so that all these calamities reduced him from riches to poverty, and from great happiness to deep sorrow in one day! O what a sad day! Some men, who had no God to whom they could go for relief, would have gone mad, and some would have raged furiously against

God for suffering all this evil to come upon them. But "Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head," in token of his being in great distress; "and fell down upon the ground and worshipped," to express the humility of his mind and his dependence still upon God; so that he did not curse him to his face, as the adversary said he would, if God severely afflicted him. And he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb," or mother earth, "and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." As if he had said, "All I had came from God; he gave it to me, and he has thought proper to take it away. Whatever he does is all right; though it be ever so painful to me; so I will not murmur, but still bless his holy name."

How beautiful does the piety of Job here appear! "In all this Job sinned not," that is, he uttered no wrong expression about what God had suffered to be done to him, "nor charged God foolishly."

The adversary was still inclined to accuse Job, and though he had shown so much piety under his losses, still his tongue was employed in accusing him of not being sincere before God. We think it very likely that though Satan is mentioned as doing this, yet it may mean that wicked people, set on by the workings of his evil spirit on their spirits, might be his accusers, and so Satan might accuse Job through them. However, the adversary now said, that if Job's life was in danger from a painful disease, he would then no longer love God, and so his religion would be at an end. Well, God then suffered sore boils to smite Job, and to cover him all over from head to foot. And he was so bad that he took a piece of a broken pot to scrape himself, and he sat down in a heap of ashes. To add to his misery yet further, his wife provokingly asked him if he would now be religious any longer, as he had proof enough that his religion did not save him from trouble; she then told him to curse God rather than bless him, and then die in despair. This wicked woman, however, failed in shaking the riety of Job. For he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

In the midst of his trouble three of Job's particular friends, having heard of what had happened to him, came from their distant places of abode to visit him. They are called Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they approached his house they saw him in his sad condition, but he was so altered, that in any other place they would not have known him. At this sight they were much affected, and



even wept. Then, as a sign of their grief, they "rent every one his mantle," or cloak; and they took up handfuls of dust from the ground and throwing them into the air, let them fall in showers on their heads. Then "they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great." Not indeed but that they took some food and rest during this time, or they could not have lived; but they spent most of the nights, as well as days, in showing their sorrow. It was customary to mourn seven days on any occasion of great grief: Joseph "made a mourning for his father seven days;" and the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, after they had buried the bodies of Saul and his sons, who had been slain by the Philistines, in the same manner fasted seven days.

Job at last broke the silence, and opened his mouth with cursing the day

in which he was born. He did not indeed curse and swear—he was too good a man to do so—but he gave way to strong expressions of complaint, which is what is meant here by cursing. For we have his words put down, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard



HIPPOPOTAMUS, OR SEA-HORSE,

it from above, neither let the light shine upon it." He thought that his birth-day, instead of being a day of rejoicing, ought rather to have everything bad said about it, or rather to be forever forgotten, for it had only brought him into a world of the greatest sorrow. Here, however, though Job showed impatience, which was wrong, he said nothing against God or religion, and showed that he was not inclined to depart from the fear of God, because he had afflicted him.

His friends then spoke to him one after another. But instead of giving him any comfort, they only irritated his mind. Though they were good men, they foolishly supposed that Job never could have been so afflicted, if he had not done something that was very wicked. They therefore told him that he must have been guilty of being a hypocrite, and that all his religion was in mere show, and not in his heart. They also accused him, as he was a great man, of being what great men in power too often are—especially in

the East—a great oppressor, and a covetous man. Job could not bear this, for he knew it was not true, and he was hurt at his friends adding to his sorrows, by thinking so badly of him. This made him speak of himself in the high and good terms in which he sometimes did in the course of their conversation; not that he was vain of his goodness or good deeds, and loved to talk about them, but he was obliged to do so in his own defence. Yet he owned, as every good man will, that he was truly a sinner before God, and this no doubt helped to reconcile him to God's allowing him thus to be afflicted; but he still held fast his religion, and he said of God, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He also comforted himself in the hope, that when this vain life should be over, he should see his Redeemer in a happier and a better world.

At length Job's friends, thinking it was of no use to talk to him any longer—as they could not make him admit that his sufferings were on account of his not being sincere before God, as they supposed—the conversation was dropped. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes."

A young man of the name of Elihu, having heard the debate between Job and his friends, was much vexed at them all. He thought that Job had been wrong in trying so much to vindicate himself from the charge of having deserved his sufferings in a particular manner, while he had said little or nothing to vindicate the character and honor of God, though he had afflicted him. He was also very angry with Job's three friends, "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job;" they were unable to disprove what he had said about his own uprightness, and yet they had set him down as a hypocrite, because God had greatly afflicted him.

The young should always give place to the old, because the old ought first to be heard, and are expected, from having more years, to have also more wisdom. Elihu therefore "had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he,"—that is, Job and his friends—and when Job had finally given over replying, and his friends speaking, Elihu made an apology for opening his mouth, and then said, "Hearken to me; I also will give mine opinion." / Then he began to blame Job for saying so much about his own goodness, and complaining of his sufferings from the hand of God, though, indeed, he had not murmured against him in a spirit of rebellion. After remarking on many wrong expressions which Job had uttered, he at length closed all by vindicating the conduct of God in all his dealings in

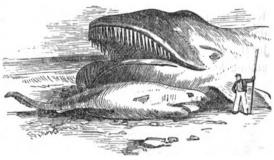


Job. 503

Providence with sinful men, and showing how impossible it is for us, his humble creatures, to search his ways even in common things. He pointed out the wonders of the thunder and lightning; the snow and the rain; the wind and the clouds; and then assured his hearers that such a great God would not afflict without a just cause.

Elihu having done speaking, God, in some wonderful way, at length himself spoke, with a strong voice which proceeded out of a whirlwind that

sprung up at the time. By this voice he reminded Job of his divine power and glory in all the works of creation, and called upon him to humble himself before him as the Judge of all the earth. Then Job cried out, "Behold, I am vile!" And after the voice from God had spoken once more,



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Job owned his folly and ignorance, confessed his sins and repented before God; for, though he was a good man, the best of men have many reasons to humble themselves daily before the most holy God, and to say in his most pure presence, as Job did, that they "repent in dust and ashes"—the most humbling sign of grief and misery.

Then, as Job's friends had wrongly accused him and judged harshly of him, God spoke to "Eliphaz the Temanite," and told him that he was displeased with him and his two friends for what they had said about Job. And he desired them to go with Job, who should offer up a sacrifice which he would accept, in order to take away his displeasure. Thus, after all his sufferings, God honored Job before his friends. In reading of this sacrifice offered by Job for his friends, we are also reminded that as we have sinned against God, and do often offend him, we must go to Jesus Christ our great advocate, as Job's friends did to him; and we must look to his sacrifice as the never-failing way of obtaining acceptance with God.

So when Job and his friends had done as God commanded, God accepted of them all and received them into his favor.

And now Job became rich again in this world's wealth, for "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." "Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his

acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren;" and so divided a portion of his property among them, as he did among his sons.

"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations;" so that he is supposed to have lived



CROCODILE

above two hundred years. His great age is one reason which guides us to the time in which he lived, as, after the days of Moses, we read of none living to so lengthened a period.

"So Job died, being old and full of days."

Before we finish with the history of Job, some few words must be ex-

plained which you will meet with in the latter chapters, in which God speaks from the whirlwind.

In the thirty-eighth chapter and thirty-first verse, you will find this question: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" By Pleiades is meant the seven stars which sometimes appear close together in one part of the sky; and the question perhaps meant, Canst thou cluster together such a group of stars as that, Job? Orion is a large group of stars, amounting to two thousand that may be seen; and more not clearly seen: and who can separate or alter them? In the next verse we also read, "Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" By Mazzaroth it is

thought the South Pole, or the South part of the heavens or sky, is meant, with its stars. Arcturus is a constellation or number of stars, seen sometimes near the North Pole, or Northern part of the world, and by its sons are probably meant its stars.

In the thirty-ninth chapter and ninth verse, there is another questions that needs explaining: "Will the Unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?" Here Job is taught God's power by the beasts he has made. Unicorn means one-horned. Since men have learned more of the history of the different parts of the world, it has been found out that there is a creature called the Rhinoceros, which is very strong and fierce, and has one horn. Such a wild beast, though God made him with ease, Job could

not even have dared to feed loose in his stable, or to make work in his fields.

In the thirty-ninth chapter and thirteenth verse, we read of the Ostrich. This is a bird that is now often shown in this country, and the pictures of which you must frequently have seen. It is often taller than a man, with a large body, thick and long legs, and long neck. The feathers of its tail are very beautiful, and being prepared, are among the most handsome ornaments worn by ladies.



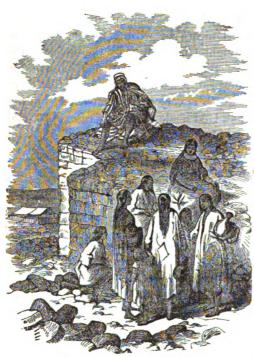
ARAMAN CAMEL

In the fourteenth chapter and fifteenth verse, we read of the Behemoth, in which is described a huge and powerful creature, with bones as "strong pieces of brass," and "like bars of iron." Many writers think that this means the Elephant, but it seems most nearly to describe a very powerful creature called the Hippopotamus, or Sea-Horse.

Lastly, in the forty-first chapter, there is a grand description of the power of a creature belonging to the water. It is called Leviathan, but whether it means the Whale or the Crocodile is not certain, both being very large and powerful creatures, to which many parts of the description will apply. Many writers are inclined to think that the Whale is intended.

In finishing the history of Job, we learn that good men may be very much afflicted; and, that instead of supposing God does not love them because he afflicts them, we ought to believe that he intends to do them good by it; just as your kind parents intend to do you good, when they reprove you for doing what is wrong.

We are also taught that it is God who can make us rich or poor, and so we ought to be contented with what he sends us. When he thought it right to make Job poor, how soon he lost his all! and when he thought it right



BEDOUINS IN THE ARABIAN DESERT.

to make him rich again, how soon he recovered his wealth! God can do everything; let us trust in him, love and serve him, and then we are sure that he will do everything that is best for us, and bring us at last to heaven, where "God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces;" that is, where, what trouble soever may happen to us here, we shall not have any cause to weep any more.

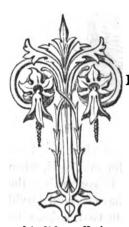
A thought or two more before concluding this book. There are no trials in this life except that they have concealed within them certain blessings. We can never drink from the cup of sorrow, except that down within it somewhere—among its dregs, it may be—are settled richest mercies, provided we are true to

our souls, and stand fixed in the submissive faith that should bind every one to God. The power of our Supreme Ruler may be exercised on the side of our success in the affairs of life, or it may bring upon us severe afflictions and trials. In either event it becomes us to be contented, remembering that with our success comes greater responsibility; or with our calamities, higher spiritual profit and advancement.



# PSALMS:

Da "The Book of Praises, Hymns, and Prayers." The title, "Psalms," signifies "holy songs," and upon closer corutiny we find them to be made up of inspired hymns, songs, meditations and prayers. In them are furnished us every variety of Hebrew poetry, and from them are reflected the substance of all or nearly all the teachings of the Bible. They were evidently designed for the instruction and profit of the church in all ages; and they carry with them an amount of worship and spiritual strength that tells wonderfully upon every Christian who reads, studies, and sings them. They are useful, also, in their connection with the sucred book of God, as having very plain types, shadows, and prophecies, besides other matters of clear confirmation



# Explanation of the Design of the Psalms.—Their Titles.

HE Book of Psalms means "The Book of Praises," because they were to be sung in the temple-worship, and because a great number of them are full of praise. Many of them are, however, prayers; many are designed merely to teach important truths, as the providence or care of God, the necessity of holiness, and the like; many are prophetical, and sing about things which had not happened when they were written, and especially about Jesus Christ—the glory of his person

—his life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdom—for David was a prophet as well as a king, and so God spake by him to his church, and encouraged their hopes in the Messiah, or divinely anointed Saviour, who was to rule over his holy people Israel.

As these psalms were to be sung, they were written in POETRY, though they are translated into prose in our Bible, because it was not possible to translate them word for word in any other way. Our psalms in verse give the meanings of the Scripture Psalms, but not the exact words.

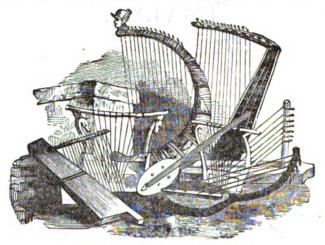
The Psalms being written in poetry, for the purpose of singing, are full of poetical expressions or words not commonly used in prose, or in the language in which we generally talk. This will account for many expressions which you, perhaps, do not easily understand; because, in

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poetry, what are called figures of speech are used, or one word is employed to mean another—things seen to explain things not seen, and things of earth to describe things of heaven.

The titles of the Psalms are often difficult to understand. We must just look at them. You will observe that many of them were written at



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE ANCIENT JEWS.

the time of particular events which happened to David, of which you have read in his history. The third psalm is called a psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. The seventh psalm is concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite, who seems wrongfully to have accused David to Saul. The eighteenth psalm is a psalm of praise to God, written by David in the day that the Lord delivered him from all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. The thirtieth was sung at the dedication of the house of David, when he had built and finished his house of cedar upon Mount Sion. The thirty-fourth is called a psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. You remember that David fled from Saul to Achish, king of Gath: that being discovered there, he changed his behavior, and was considered as one mad; and so he was driven away, and escaped the danger that he feared. On that occasion he made this psalm. The thirty-eighth psalm is called "a psalm to bring to remembrance." David was then in trouble, and brings to remembrance why God afflicted him. The forty-fifth is called "a song of loves." It is a prophecy about Christ, and is quoted as such in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it shows the love which the church of Christ, that is, his people, everywhere have to him, and their delight in his honor and glory. The fifty-first psalm was written after Nathan had told his parable to David, when he had caused the death of his faithful soldier, Uriah. It shows how his heart was broken before God on account of his great sin. The fifty-second psalm is called "a psalm of David, when Doeg,

the Edomite, came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech." You recollect that David, having escaped from Saul, went to Ahimelech the priest, at Nob, from whom he received bread and a sword. Doeg, the Edomite, was present, and he told Saul of all that had taken place. Saul instantly charged the priest with being guilty of treason; and though he protested he was quite innocent, Saul would not believe him, but ordered his men to slay him and all the other priests that were with him. This they refused to do; but Doeg obeyed his command, slew eighty-five priests, destroyed the city of Nob itself, and even killed all the men, women, and little children, oxen, asses, and sheep. When David heard this sad account of what the wicked Doeg had done, he wrote this psalm. The fifty-fourth psalm was written "when the Ziphim," or Ziphites, "came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?" of which you may read in the fourteenth chapter of the



First Book of Samuel, and in the beginning of the twenty-sixth chapter of the same book. The fifty-sixth psalm was composed "when the Philistines took him in Gath," of which you may see the account in the twenty-first chapter of the First Book of Samuel, from the tenth verse. The fifty-seventh psalm was made "when he fled from Saul in the cave." The fifty-ninth psalm is a prayer to God for help, "when Saul sent and

they watched the house to kill him!" See the nineteenth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and the eleventh verse. The sixtieth psalm: read the eighth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and the eighteenth chapter of the First Book of Chronicles, if you would learn all the particulars of this part of David's history. The sixty-third psalm was composed by David "when he was in the wilderness of Judah;" as he fled there both from Saul and Absalom, we cannot tell on which occasion he wrote it; but it shows how much he loved to worship God, and how greatly he was grieved, when he could not join the people in going to his sanctuary. The hundred and forty-second psalm by David is called "a prayer when he was in the cave."

Besides these titles, which show on what occasions many of the Psalms were written, there are other titles which are not given in English words;



ALMOND BLOSSOM AND FRUIT.

because it was not exactly known, by those who rendered the Hebrew Bible into English, what might be the meaning of those titles. I will tell you, however, what they are generally thought to mean.

The title to the fourth psalm is, "To the chief musician on Neginoth." Here I must remind you that there were many players upon musical instruments in the ancient Israelitish worship; and that these instruments were made with strings, to be struck with something to make them sound; or they were wind instruments sounded by the breath, and of other sorts,

something like those which are now used in music meetings. There was a master, or head, who directed all the players on each particular sort of instrument, or class of instruments. This was the chief musician. Now, David intended this psalm to be played upon an instrument, or perhaps a variety of instruments, called Neginoth; which is understood to mean a hand or stringed instrument; that is, an instrument made with strings, and played with the hand, and not with the mouth. The fifth psalm is "To the chief musician upon Nehiloth," and this word is descriptive of a hollow or wind instrument, or wind instruments, and the chief musician of the instrument, or the various instruments blown with the breath, was to direct the playing and singing of this psalm.

The sixth psalm is addressed, as the fourth, "To the chief musician on

Neginoth," but it adds "upon Sheminith." Sheminith means "the eighth"—that is, the eighth string, or the instrument with eight strings. So that the title means, "To the chief musician upon the stringed instruments, to be played upon the eight-stringed instrument;" or, it might mean, to be played chiefly on the eighth string, in a very high tone. The seventh psalm is called "Shiggaion of David." The meaning of this word is not very plain; but perhaps, as it means "to wander," it signifies a psalm written like an ode; that is, with lines of all sorts of length, some very short, and some very long, instead of continuing all in one steady measure. The eighth psalm is addressed "To the chief musician upon Gittith." It is thought likely by some that Gittith was an instrument which Jeduthun,

and his family after him, played upon, and which was committed to the care of Obededom, the Gittite, and his family. The real meaning of this word is, however, not well known. Remember, it is not a part of the word of God, but only a title to the psalm, of no more importance in itself than the number of the psalm, and so we lose nothing which it is needful for us to know, if we cannot always understand the meaning of a title.

The ninth psalm is directed "To the chief musician upon Muthlabben." This was, perhaps, the name of a tune, or of an instrument. The sixteenth psalm, and some others, have the title, "Michtam of David."



WIND INSTRUMENTS OF DAVID'S TIME.

Michtam means "A golden or excellent psalm." Some think this was the name of a tune which, on account of its excellency, was called golden, and to which David wished the words of his psalm to be sung; others think it was a musical instrument, which, being much admired, bore the name of Michtam. The twenty-second psalm is inscribed "To the chief musician on Aijeleth Shahar." Some think the words mean, "at the dawning of the day;" and so the psalm was intended to be sung by the priests and Levites every morning, as soon as the day began to appear. The thirty-second psalm is marked by the word "Maschil," which means instruction. This title may, therefore, merely describe what the psalm contains, or, like the others I have noticed, mean the name of the tune to which it was to be sung.

or of the instrument on which it was to be played. The thirty-ninth psalm was intended for Jeduthun the musician, and the forty-second for the sons of Korah, who performed in the holy service. The forty-fifth psalm is addressed "To the chief musician upon Shoshannim," which was either the name of an instrument of six strings, or the first word in a sacred song, to the tune of which David might wish this psalm to be sung. The forty-sixth psalm was most probably intended, by the title, to be played upon an instrument called Alamoth, as it is mentioned in Chronicles. The fifty-third psalm is directed to the chief musician upon Mahalath, which is thought by



some to have been a wind instrument. The title of the fifty-sixth psalm has a very difficult word, and is for, or "To the chief musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim." A learned man says that the words mean, "concerning the mute dove among them that are in far places;" and so they signify that when David wrote this psalm, he was as a quiet innocent dove, far from home, among the wicked Philistines. The fifty-seventh psalm has this title: "To the chief musician Altaschith, Michtam of David," &c. Altaschith means, "do not destroy," and is thought to describe the state of trouble in which David's mind was when he wrote the psalm; as if he had said, "A psalm written in great grief, when I prayed to God not to destroy me." The

sixtieth psalm is "To the chief musician upon Shushan-eduth;" which, perhaps, means a six-stringed instrument. The word "Neginah," in the title of the sixty-first psalm, means the same as Neginoth; that is, a stringed The eighty-eighth psalm has this expression in the title: "To the chief musician upon Mahalath Leannoth." I have already said that Mahalath is taken for a musical wind instrument, and as Leannoth signifies to answer, it is likely that this psalm was to be sung in what we call responses; that is, by parties of singers singing by turns.

The hundred and nineteenth psalm is divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; each part being of equal length, and having eight verses. Aleph, Beth, and the other words at the beginning of every ninth verse, are the names of the Hebrew letters, just as if we were to proceed in the same way with A, B, C. There are four psalms so divided, which we call alphabetical psalms. These are the twenty-fifth, thirty-fourth, thirty-seventh, and hundred and nineteenth; though only the latter is so listinguished in our Bibles. The reason for this order seems to have been thereby to help the memory. As the first word of every eight verses began with the same letter, it would be more easy to recollect what followed. Here it may be worthy of remark, that the hundred and nineteenth is the longest of the psalms, and longer than any chapter in the whole Bible. The

hundred and twentieth psalm bears the name of "a song of degrees," as likewise do many others that follow. They are generally supposed to have been sung by the Levites as they ascended some steps in the temple when they engaged in the sacred services; and so they sung them through as they advanced, by degrees, up the steps. In many of the psalms, you will find the word "Selah." It is not certain what this means, but the most general opinion is that it was a mark in music, signifying that the singer should pause. In the ninth psalm, we have the words, "Higgaion, Selah." Higgaion means meditation; perhaps signifying that the singers should particularly meditate on what they were then singing, as well as pause.



We must now take notice of the authors of the psalms, for though they are often called David's Psalms, they were not all written by him, and you will find many of them with other names. Many psalms are by Asaph, who is mentioned as a seer or prophet in the twenty-ninth chapter of the second book of Chronicles, and the thirtieth verse. The forty-fifth psalm is by Solomon, or written by some one for his use. The ninetieth psalm was written by Moses, and is supposed to have been occasioned by God's threatening to cut off the people of Israel from entering the land of Canaan, when they believed the reports of the timid spies about its dangers instead

of trusting in God. Many psalms have not any names of their authors, and so they can only be guessed at from the subjects of them, and as they refer to events which happened when David was not living. Thus, the hundred and thirty-seventh psalm is an affecting account of the sufferings of the Israelites when they were captives in Babylon, and hung their harps on the willows which grew there in abundance by the side of the streams, refusing to play them on account of their great sorrow. As this happened long after David's time, it is supposed that the psalm was written by some Levite on his entering as a captive into Babylon. Again; the hundred and twenty-sixth psalm expresses joy on return from captivity; and as Ezra the scribe was



ANCIENT LAMPS.

among those released by the proclamation of Cyrus, it is supposed that he was its author.

With one more observation we shall finish the Book of Psalms. You will find some of them containing some unusually severe and angry expressions about punishing wicked men, and praying that God would do

them all sorts of harm. Now, Jesus Christ tells us to pray for our enemies, and even to do good to them that hate us and do us harm. The word of God does not contradict itself; and very learned men tell us that the parts which we so read are prophetical, and tell what God will do to the wicked, and ought not to read in English as prayers for his vengeance to fall upon them. If, however, it were allowed to a Jew so to pray, it is not allowed to a Christian. We are to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful; and there is something very delightful to a pious mind to be able to return good for evil, and even to pray for a cruel enemy. Without we can do this, we only mock God, and shut ourselves out from hope of his mercy, when we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

<sup>\*</sup> It has recently been conjectured by Biblical scholars, and with very good reason, that the one hundred and forty-ninth Psalm was composed by some writer, priest or Levite, in the temple service after, the victories of the Asmonean princes (the Maccabees), not more the 150 years before Christ.

### PROVERBS:

On a "Collection of Wise Sayings" made by the wisest of men. The "Proverbs" of any nation are indicative of its wisest and best thoughts, but those collected and in part framed by Solomon have these advantages over all other collections, that they are the collected wisdom of a very intelligent and religious people; that they were arranged very carefully and with long study, by a man greatly renowned for wisdom; that the whole book is inspired by the Holy Spirit; and that it contains much profound and important instruction, which is not proverbial in character. Like the Paalms, the book is poetical in its form and construction. It is divided into thirty-one chapters.



HEN a wise man speaks, we ought to listen to him. God gave Solomon a great deal of wisdom—he was the wisest man that ever lived. And I will tell you how he got his wisdom. He asked for it of God, and God was pleased with his request, and granted it. And if any of you, my young friends, "lack," or want "wisdom," let him ask of God, who giveth it to all liberally.

We treasure up a great many foolish things in our memories; here are some wise things to treasure up. And remember, that though Solomon speaks, yet as God gave him the wisdom, and it relates to what will make us good in life, and happy in death and beyond the grave, we ought to regard every word we here read as if God spoke in our ears.

The Proverbs do not begin till the tenth chapter; the chapters before that are only a sort of introduction, to tell you what is coming, and how and why you ought to attend to it. It is said, "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets;" meaning, that the instruction of these proverbs is not a secret, but a thing published, that all may hear and become wise. Here wisdom is spoken of as if it were a female person.

The thirtieth chapter contains the Proverbs of Agur; and the thirty-first of king Lemuel, which is thought to be another name for Solomon.

I pray that God may give you his grace to practise these Proverbs, and then you may expect to grow up both wise and happy. Amen.

## ECCLESIASTES:

On "Book of the Preacher," so named, doubtless, because of the purpose of the writer and the character of its teachings. Its discourses, through twelve chapters, make up a monument of testimony in behalf of righteousness and godliness, as against sin, and all the silly pleasures in its train. There are various remarkable things sold us in it, as well as very beautiful descriptions given of man's peculiar position in, and connection with, nature all around him.

HIS was king Solomon's opinion of the world. He meant by it that there is nothing in it which can satisfy the wants of the soul, and that it can never make any one truly happy. It has many pleasures to offer us; but then they will do us no good when we come to die; and those who live longest will live but a little time in this world. Then that is the wisest person who is always preparing for the next world. Now this is what Solomon meant to teach us in writing this book.

He was a rich and powerful king, and if any one could find happiness in this world, such a one as Solomon could. But after he had tried honors, and riches, and pleasures, and learning, and knowledge of all sorts, he said all was vanity.

He meant by this that all were good for nothing. He was too wise a man not to know that honors are very pleasant things, and riches help to get many enjoyments; and pleasures have some charms in them; and learning has its delights; and knowledge is very useful, and makes us respectable;—but then he would have us remember that we have souls which require our care, and that if we neglect to take care of these, and do not pay much attention to their happiness—honors, riches, pleasures, learning and knowledge, as they must leave us at the grave, will prove in the end "vanity of vanities."

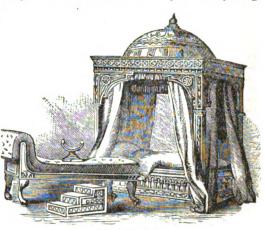
We must not, then, make our happiness to consist of honors; nor set our hearts covetously on getting riches; nor let our time and attention be given away to silly pleasures; nor study to get human learning and knowledge, while we take no pains to become wise unto salvation.

What we have said is the substance of what Solomon has taught us in



this book. But the last chapter is more particularly designed for the notice of the young. In this Solomon writes as if he would say, "Seeing the world is all so vain, and that there is nothing in it that remains long, all its comforts are of a dying sort;" then we will tell you of the best remedy to cure these evils. This remedy is to serve God while you are young.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Now you are healthy and strong, remember him,-and then you will find comfort and support for your mind when you become old and weak. Now before you go into the world, remember him,—and then you will have comfort dwelling in your mind ready to support it whenever you meet with Now while your trouble. heart is not filled with the



THE ROYAL COUCH.

follies of the world, remember him,—and then you will be the more likely to have room in your hearts for God, and true happiness.

Thus you will bear Solomon's advice in mind, and learn by his experience, without suffering the pain of his disappointments; for everywhere in this book we not only observe a deep religious sense, but catch a chill directed against every earthly aim, and every foolish effort in life; a contempt is gathered here for everything perverse in man, and an earnest desire for watchfulness after all human vanities and fooleries. In no previous writing has all cause of pride and vain imagination so roundly and fully been taken from man; and no work is so filled with a powerful and telling outery of indignation against all the vain things of this lower world.



#### SONG OF SOLOMON:

On "Solomon's Secred Poem," composed by Israel's wise king, under the endearing figure of a bridegroom and bride, and setting forth the love of Christ for his church; he being the heavenly Bridegroom; ministers being his friends; the bride the church of true believers; and her companions all such as seek the society and friendship of the church. It has been well and truly said, that no wicked or sensual person can understand this poem. It is altogether a sublime allegory, furnishing to the thoughtful, spiritual person, lessons of a very beautiful and excellent type.

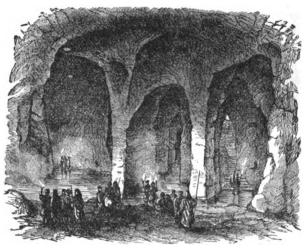
N allegory is rather difficult to understand. This book is called an allegory. It signifies a writing, the language of which seems to represent one thing, but really it means another. The celebrated "Pilgrim's Progress," by John Bunyan, is an allegory; and while it describes a journey over hills, vales and water, it signifies all that happens to the Christian while he is in this world and on his way to heaven.

The Song of Solomon signifies the love of Christ to his church or people, and the love of his church or people to him; and, being poetry, it has a number of comparisons with objects in nature and art, like the Psalms. The sun, the moon, the lily, the rose, the apple-tree, the beautiful hart, the majestic horse, the fragrant spices, the precious stones, the lofty towers, the splendid army,—and many objects of superior excellency or grandeur in Eastern countries,—are all employed by which to express the language of love and admiration. We can never think too highly of the blessed Saviour, and we know how tenderly he loves his thurch.

We do not suppose you could well understand this book were we to stempt to explain it to you. We shall only add, that Christ, in this book is represented as the bridegroom or husband of his church, and the church as the bride or wife; just as, in other places, God is sometimes called a Father, and we his sons and daughters; and so, we learn that the tender love which exists between affectionate fathers and mothers is a faint resemblance of that devotedness of heart which the church of Christ have

towards him, who is "altogether lovely," and that everlasting love which he bears to his church.

On account of the excellency and purity of the subject about which Solomon here sings, this poetical book is called "The Song of Songs," which means, "The most excellent Song;" a song that is far better than all other songs. It is expressive of the utmost fervor, as well as delicacy of passion; it is instinct with all the spirit and sweetness of affection; it abounds throughout with beauties, and holds up a delightful and romantic display of nature, painted at its most interesting season, and described with every ornament an inventive fancy could furnish. We meet with, in its objects, the choicest plants, most charming flowers, most attractive fruits. the vigor of spring, the sweet verdure of fields, the cheering presence of fountains, the richest odors of gardens, the sweet singing of birds, the soft notes of the turtle-dove, the sensuous delight of the palate in milk, honey, and the choicest wine. To these it adds all that is beautiful and graceful in form. The spiritual allegory thus wrought to the highest condition of perfection, appropriate to the human understanding, seems especially consistent with the prophetic style accustomed to predict evangelical blessings by such figures; and Solomon doubtless found a pattern for such parabolical representation in the forty-fifth Psalm.



BOYAL CISTERN AT JERUSALEM.

# THE FOUR GREATER PROPHETS.

On the words which were to come to pass, and were uttered by the chosen men of God—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The writers were a class of ministers, once called seers, or prophets. They were the special guardians of God's religion, at times when it seemed most in danger of being overturned and destroyed by the wickedness of men. There were prophets earlier than these—as Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah—who committed nothing to writing, and yet whose deeds were so wonderful that they still hold high places in Scripture and the religious world, because of the extraordinary favor and power they enjoyed from God. The Four Greater Prophets here given embrace a large range of subject, relating to the Jewish people, to Jesus Christ, to the Christian religion, and to the empires and nations of the world down to the end of time.



ROPHECIES are words that tell us of things that are to come to pass a great while before they take place; and prophets are those who speak these words. These prophecies, among other uses, serve to show us that the Scriptures are of no human origin, but are really the word of God; because, as we said before, none but God can possibly know what is to happen many hundreds of

years to come. They prove that "every word of God is true," and, as his words have come to pass, so all that remain to be fulfilled shall take place.

The prophets most frequently spoke in what is called figurative language, and so they used figures or similitudes to express things which were to happen; and sometimes they were ordered to do so by signs, and at other times by plain words. As they prophesied under a divine influence, or the power of God's Spirit affecting their minds, they could not always even know themselves what was fully meant by their prophecies. By speaking

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in obscure language, while they said enough to warn the sinful people whom they addressed, they so concealed the bringing about the events which they foretold, that no human means could be used to try and baffle them—though, had they spoken plainer, no device could, indeed, have succeeded against the determination of God. Kings, queens, and magistrates, are frequently represented by the sun, moon, and stars; kingdoms and cities, by mountains and hills; God's faithful covenant, or engagements to bless his people, by the promise of marriage, in which the husband or wife agree

to be faithful to each other as long as they live; and idolatry by the most wicked and polluted deeds in society.

Some of the prophets spoke of their prophecies as "the burden of the Lord;" perhaps, because they were a great weight upon their spirits, when they plainly foretold heavy punishments to be inflicted on the people of God, on account of their sins; or, perhaps, because they pronounced a heavy doom, which should press down the guilty people, as a burden does an animal or a man, when it is too weighty for him to bear.

Most of the prophets lived during the times of the kings of Israel and Judah, of which you have read. There were other prophets besides



BLOWING OF TRUMPET AT NEW MOON.

those whose writings are here gathered together; but all were not commanded to write what they wrote, but only those who foretold things which were far distant.

The prophets are not arranged in the order in which they wrote, but rather according to the extent of their prophecies, the large books being placed first.

The books of the prophets are sixteen in number. Four of these are called the Greater Prophets, not because they were more important than the rest, but because their prophecies are more extensive. The remain-

ing twelve are, on account of their containing less, called the Minos Prophets.

The Jews were privileged with prophets to warn them against the consequences of sin, and to stir them up to serve the true God, from the time they left Egypt, to the time when they were carried away captives into Babylon, which occupied a period of nine hundred years.

But the written prophecies occupy a period of only three hundred and fifty-six years. The order in which the prophets wrote will be seen by the following list:

- Hosea began to prophesy about the year 3194, in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Jeroboam II.
- 2. Amos began to prophesy about the year 3219, in the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II.
- Isaiah began to prophesy about the year 3236, in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
- 4. JONAH began to prophesy in the reigns of Manasseh, Joash, and Jeroboam II.
- 5. MICAH began to prophesy about the year 3246, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, at the same time with Isaiah.
- 6. NAHUM began to prophesy about the year 3291, in the reign of Hezekiah, at the same time with Isaiah.
- JEREMIAH began to prophesy about the year 3375, in the reigns of Josiah, Jehoaz, and Jehoiakim.
- 8. ZEPHANIAH began to prophesy about the year 3381, in the reign of Josiah, about the same time with Jeremiah.
- 9. JOEL began to prophesy in the reign of Josiah.
- Daniel began to prophesy about the year 3398, and was taken captive into Chaldea in the reign of Jehoiakim, and prophesied during the captivity.
- HABAKKUK began to prophesy about the year 3394, in the reign of Jehoiakim, at the same time with Jeremiah.
- 12. EZEKIEL began to prophesy about the year 3409, during part of the captivity.
- 13. Obadiah began to prophesy about the year 3414, after the taking of Jerusalem.
- HAGGAI began to prophesy about the year 3484. Born during the captivity. Prophesied about the same time with Zechariah.
- 15. ZECHARIAH prophesied about the same time with Haggai.
- 16. MALACHI, the last of the Jewish prophets, prophesied after the death of Nehemiah.

#### ISAIAH.

ISAIAH has justly been called "The prince of prophets" from the dignity and glowing eloquence of his prophecies, the great variety of topics which he discussed, his clear and minute predictions of the coming Messiah, and the length of his prophetic career, which probably continued for sixty or seventy years. He must have been at least ninety at the time of his

martyrdom by the cruel Manasseh. But he was a historian as well as a prophet, and his annals of the reign of Uzziah and Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, and xxxii. 32, though not now extant, except portions in the books of Kings and Chronicles, show that he possessed rare abilities as a historian.

The prophecies of Isaiah are too important in all respects to be passed over without giving a brief account of the principal topics of which they treat. He commenced his prophetic labors in the latter part of the reign of King Uzziah or Azariah (see 2 Kings, chapters xiv. and xv., and 2 Chronicles xxvi.), and while yet a very young man seems to have uttered some of those very beautiful and impressive prophecies found in the second, third, fourth and fifth chapters of his prophecy. He was a friend, and possibly an instructor of Micah, and there is in the second chapter of Isaiah, verses 2–5, a passage of great beauty, which is repeated nearly word for word in Micah iv. 1–4. The first chapter of Isaiah seems to be a sort of preface to the whole prophecy. It was undoubtedly written in the last years of his life, and reviews in a general way the subjects concerning which he had prophesied. His parable of the vineyard (chapter v.) is one of great power, and in its denunciations of the sinners in Zion, one of terrible invective.

But the prophet does not seem to have been so fully consecrated to his sacred mission till the close of the reign of Uzziah. He was yet a young man when he had that wonderful vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple," which is recorded in the sixth chapter. Filled with a sense of his own unworthiness and of the divine majesty, he exclaimed: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the LORD of hosts." But God was thus graciously preparing him for that complete consecration for his work which made him thenceforth the greatest of the prophets of the old dispensation. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." It was a natural consequence of this consecration that he should respond at once to the divine demand, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" "Here am I; send me." And in the more than sixty years that followed, Isaiah was always ready to declare the whole counsel of God. In the reign of Ahaz, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, had formed an alliance to attack and destroy the kingdom of Judah, and Ahaz, the king of

Judah, in great alarm, proposed to ally himself with the king of Assyria, to compel his enemies to withdraw. Isaiah is sent to Ahaz to warn him against this measure, and to assure him that Israel and Syria shall both be destroyed. But Ahaz refuses to hearken, and persists in calling the Assyrian king thither, who comes only to harass and plunder those who had invited him. Then Isaiah is sent of God to declare the speedy downfall of Syria and Israel, the destruction of the Assyrian kingdom by Babylon, and, more important to those who heard than all else, that Judah should be carried into captivity for the sins of its king and people, but that a remnant should return, and that to them should come the Redeemer of Israel, the Immanuel born of a virgin mother, the Prince of Peace. God had directed Isaiah to name his two sons in accordance with these prophecies, and to make his naming of them so public that it should be a sign unto his people; and accordingly the elder was name Shearjashub-"A remnant shall return," and the younger, Maher-shalal-hash-baz-"Hasten-booty, speed-spoil," from the prediction that within three years the spoils of Damascus and the booty of Samaria should be carried away by the king of Assyria. The chapters from the seventh to the thirteenth are occupied with denunciations of the wrath of God on Israel and Syria, and eventually on Assyria, of whom Judah is exhorted not to be afraid; and, coupled with these predictions, are the most glowing prophecies of the Messiah, the rod which should spring out of the stem of Jesse, and of the glorious times which should come to Judah, and to all nations when his reign should commence; and in his exultant joy the prophet breaks out into rapturous song. The next eleven chapters contain a number of prophecies, called "burdens," against the nations adjacent to Palestine, beginning with Babylon, whose glory and final overthrow were denounced, though as yet Nineveh and not Babylon was the capital of the Assyrian empire. Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia, Dumah or Seir, Arabia and Tyre, each came in for a share of the "burdens," and one of them is a prophecy of disgrace and dishonor to Shebna, the idolatrous treasurer of Ahaz. As a sign of the disasters which were to come upon the Egyptians and Ethiopians, then allies of Ahaz, Isaiah had been directed by God to walk through the streets of Jerusalem for three years without his outer garment, and barefoot. The four chapters (xxiv.-xxvii.) which follow are a summary or comprehensive rehearsal of the preceding burdens; and chapters xxviii.-xxxv. are occupied with various brief prophecies which are supposed to have been uttered mostly in the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz. Chapters xxxvi. to xxxix. are

historical, giving an account of the Assyrian invasion, the blasphemy of the Assyrian king, his utter overthrow, the sickness and miraculous recovery of Hezekiah, and the visit of Merodach-Baladan to Jerusalem.

The remaining portion, or, as it is often called, the second part of Isaiah. extending from the fortieth chapter to the close of the book, is distinct in its character, and is mainly occupied with two great themes, and the warnings. exhortations and promises to be drawn from them. It is naturally divided into three sections of nine chapters each, the first two ending with the refrain, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," and the third with the same thought in other language. In the whole of these twenty-seven chapters, Isaiah speaks as if the captivity in Babylon, which he had already so often predicted, were come, and looking forward in prophetic vision, he assures his people, in the first section, of their deliverance by the hand of Cyrus, a Persian king, whose birth did not occur till 150 years later. describes the deliverer by name, predicts his capture of Babylon and his return of the captives to their own land, his directions for the rebuilding of the temple and the lavish gifts he bestowed upon them for this purpose. Mingled with these prophecies are abundant arguments against idolatry, and denunciations of the practices then and soon after prevalent among the Jews.

In the second section the prophet passes on from this deliverance to the coming, the person, the work and mission of the Messiah, the far greater deliverer not only of the Jews but of all nations. These nine chapters (xlix.-lvii.) are full of predictions of the coming of the Redeemer, and no other prophet portrays his whole life and character so perfectly. These chapters, with Isaiah's other prophecies of the Messiah, may well be called the gospel of the Old Testament. It is strange that with this prophecy in their hands, describing Christ as a suffering, meek and lowly Messiah, yet mighty to save, the Jews in our Saviour's time should have looked only for a temporal deliverer. In the third section, closing his prophecies, the prophet draws from his preceding predictions words of warning, denunciation against idolatry, self-righteousness, and other sins, incitements to holy living and promises of a glorious future in the spiritual reign of the Messiah. In one of these chapters, he takes occasion from the then recent marriage of Hezekiah to Hephzibah, the mother of Manasseh (as already noticed under 2 Kings xxi.), to apply this auspicious event prophetically to the spiritual union of the true Zion as a bride to her Lord. "Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." The prophecy ends with songs of triumph and glory over the new heavens and the new earth to which God should gather all nations.

#### JEREMIAH.

TEREMIAH, the sad prophet—sad, because of the judgments which came thick and fast upon his beloved country and nation, and because of the sorrows, trials and persecutions which his fidelity to his convictions and to the voice of God brought upon him—was of priestly birth, being a "son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth." This little city, only three miles from Jerusalem, was one of the priestly cities, and was inhabited by the descendants of Ithamar. Some have supposed that he was the son of that Hilkiah who was high priest in the reign of Josiah, but this is improbable, as the high priests were of the family of Eleazar.

Jeremiah commenced his prophetic life when yet young. He speaks of himself as but a child (Jer. i. 6), in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah (625-628 B. C.), and was probably at that time not far from twenty years of age. Like Isaiah he received a special consecration for his work from the hand of Jehovah; and through evil report and good report, amid trials and sorrows, dangers and perils such as seldom fall to the lot of even the prophets of God, he continued his work through the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin or Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, the last kings of Judah, and after Jerusalem was destroyed and many of his countrymen carried into captivity, he continued with those who remained in the land, and finally went, against his strong remonstrance, with them into Egypt, where he probably died. His active life as a prophet continued nearly fifty years, and he must have been at his death more than seventy years of age. His temperament seems to have been naturally despondent; and in his prophecies we miss the glowing and exultant views of the future prosperity of Israel which so often meet us in the pages of Isaiah. At times he seems overwhelmed with anguish, and on one occasion, like Job, he curses the day of his birth. Except in his prophecies against other nations beside Judah, he lived too near the time of the fulfilment of his predictions, to see the glory that should follow. As a sign of the bringing of the people under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah wore a yoke around his neck. This yoke a false prophet named Hananiah tore off, and broke it, and prophesical of the restoration of the Jews from their captivity. For this act God instructed Jeremiah to pronounce his death, and Hananiah died the same year.

After the princes and people were carried away captive with Jeconiah, Jeremiah wrote to them to comfort them; and he told them that, in seventy years' time, they should be restored, if they repented and turned unto God,

and, till that time, they ought to submit themselves to God's decree, and make themselves as contented as they could in their captivity; for it is indeed of no use to fight against God. Jeremiah also told them how God would punish all the false prophets who should spring up among them in Babylon, and prophesy their more speedy delivery.

When Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem, Jeremiah was imprisoned. When the siege was suspended, and Nebuchadnezzar had retired, Jeremiah was released; but he foretold that Nebuchadnezzar would return, and burn the city to ashes. At this time he tried to escape from Jerusalem, but he was discovered by an officer as he was going out of one of the gates, and was again thrown into prison, till the king ordered him to be set at liberty.

Nebuchadnezzar did return; and as the chief men of the city thought that Jeremiah's prophecies discouraged the people, they got leave from

Zedekiah to cast him into prison; and they let him down with ropes, into a muddy well, where he must soon have perished, if God had not inclined the heart of Zedekiah to release him; and he was kept prisoner in the palace till Jerusalem was taken.

A little before this last fatal event, Zedekiah asked Jeremiah what he should do. And Jeremiah, being instructed of the Lord, told him to give himself up to Nebuchadnezzar, and it would be better for him, and his family, and for the safety of the city; but if he persisted in opposing the Chaldeans, he and his family would be ruined, and the city wholly destroyed.

Zedekiah now respected the prophet, yet did not quite like his advice, and so following his own counsel, instead of believing the word of the Lord by Jeremiah, he tried to escape from Jerusalem by



BALM. (Jer. xiii, 22.)

night, but was pursued by the Chaldeans, and being taken, his sons and nobles were put to death, his own eyes were put out, he was carried to Babylon bound in chains, and the city was burned.

Jeremiah was taken among the captives, but by order of Nebuchadnezzar, he was set free, and had the choice of going to Babylon or staying in Judea. Jeremiah chose to stay in his country. Here he was quiet till the assassination of Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar's officer. When Jeremiah was then consulted whether it would be safest to stay in Judea or escape into Egypt, the prophet advised the people to stay. They, however, thought proper to refuse his advice, and even obliged him to go with them. Here he prophesied also against the king of Egypt, and is supposed to have died in that country.

Though Babylon was now in all its glory, yet the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah both foretold its future destruction. It was impossible for any human being—unless God taught him—to foretell that so mighty a city and strong a power should at last perish and come to nothing. Yet such is now the condition of Babylon. Its very name is perished, except in history, which informs us that it was, and that it is not.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Isaiah, and in the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah, you will read prophecies of Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms," that it should never more be inhabited—that wild beasts should dwell there—that it should be a dry land and a desert—and much more of the same kind. Having been taken by Cyrus, it gradually sank into decay, and now, for sixteen hundred years, it has been nothing but a heap of ruins. Its canals are all dried up; fragments of bricks and tiles, which once formed its splendid buildings, are all that remain of their gran-There are many dens of wild beasts in various parts about the place, and it is the unmolested retreat of jackals, hyenas, and other noxious The majestic river Euphrates still flows on, the willows grow on the banks, on which the Israelitish captives hung their harps: but the city, and the palaces, and the fields, and gardens, which once adorned it, have forever disappeared! So at last shall the earth, and all the works that are in it, be burnt up, on account of the sinfulness of its inhabitants; for "every word of God is true."

## THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

THE Lamentations of Jeremiah are closely connected with his prophecies, and seem to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and with a design to bring the people to a state of repentance on account of their sins, which had been the cause of their desolate condition. Like most of the prophecies, these dirges or Lamentations have a poetical form, and some of them may have been among the mournful chants rehearsed by the captives on the banks of the Euphrates, Psalm exxxvii.

#### EZEKIEL.

THIS great though comparatively neglected prophet was, like Jeremiah, of priestly origin, being the son of a priest named Buzi, possibly of Jerusalem or its immediate vicinity. He had probably passed his thirtieth year, when the priests fully assumed their office and duties (since he is called Ezekiel, the priest), before he was carried into captivity with king Jehoiachin (599-595 B. C.), but his consecration to the prophetic work, which was much like that of Isaiah (compare Isa. vi. 1-9 with Ez. iii. 1-8), occurred in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. He was at that time by the river Chebar or Chaber, in Babylonia. This first vision and commission was given him, while Zedekiah was still king of Judah, and about six years before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the principal inhabitants of Judea were carried into captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel's mission as a prophet does not seem to have been as long as that of his predecessors, nor as that of Daniel, who was for a time his contemporary, unless a portion of his prophecies have been lost, as Josephus states. The duration of his prophetic labors in this book are but twenty-two years; yet they give evidence of a life of great activity. He dealt more in symbolical acts than the other prophets, having been instructed to do so by God, probably because the "Children of the Captivity," by whom he was greatly esteemed, watched him much more closely than the people of Jerusalem would have done, and on every occasion sought to know the meaning of his acts. We know but little of his private life or history, but there is one incident which he relates with a pathos which shows how tender were the affections of this stern and resolute prophet-priest, whose denunciations of the rebelliousness and idolatry of the Jewish people had been so harsh and full of threatenings of the judgments of God. We give the narrative in his own words: "Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold I take away from thee, the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of So I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded." This was to be a sign or symbol to the Jews of what should be their condition, within a year, when Jerusalem should be destroyed; that then when God should "take

from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters," they should have no opportunity for mourning or weeping, but should be hurried away to escape the destruction which had fallen upon their loved ones. The prophet obeyed, but his grief was too deep at the loss of "the desire of his eyes" for expression, and for months thereafter he mourned in silence over her death, and uttered no more prophecies, until the LORD in mercy opened his lips again, to speak words of comfort to those who, like himself, had been bereft. Ezekiel xxiv. 27.

An eminent German commentator, Havernick, divides the prophecies of Ezekiel into nine sections, as follows: I. Ezekiel's call and consecration, II. The carrying out of his commission, by visions, chapters i.-iii. 15. symbols and open prophecies, chapters iii. 16-vii. III. The rejection of Judah for the idolatry and sinfulness of the people, chapters viii.-xi. IV. A rehearsal and denunciation of the sins of the age in detail, chapters xii.-xix. V. The guilt which by long accumulation had drawn down God's judgments upon the nation, chapters xx.-xxiii. VI. The meaning of the punishment which had now come upon them, chapter xxiv. VII. God's judgment denounced on seven heathen nations, viz.: Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt; the last two being very remarkable for their minute details, chapters xxv.-xxxii. VIII. Prophecies concerning the future condition of Israel, chapters xxxiii.-xxxix. IX. The glorious consummation—the new temple and its worship and glory, chapters xl.-xlviii.

# DANIEL.

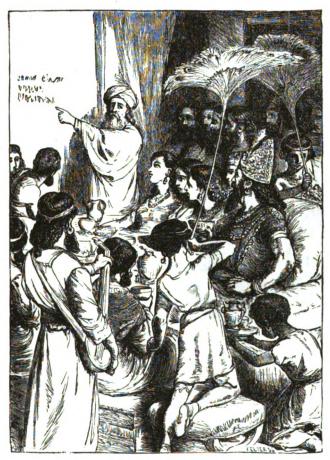
THIS prophet, remarkable alike for his royal lineage, his profound learning, his earnest piety and prayerfulness, the exalted positions which he filled, and his comprehensive insight into the future, was essentially a prophet of the captivity, his active life more than spanning the whole seventy years which preceded the restoration of the Jews.

Unlike his three predecessors, Daniel was not of priestly family, but a prince of the royal line of David. He and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, all of princely families, were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (606-604 B. C.) and carried to Babylon, where they were educated and trained for the service of the Babylonian king. This training was very thorough, and

their treatment exceedingly liberal. Daniel and his companions were at this time young; they are called children, Dan. i. 4, 13, 17, and were probably not far from eighteen years of age; but the trials which had already befallen their beloved country, and the instruction of pious parents, had led them, in early youth, to consecrate their lives to the worship of Jehovah, and, under the most trying temptations and the greatest perils, they never swerved for a moment from their devotion to his cause. Their training continued for three years, and at the end of that time they were placed in subordinate positions of trust, about the court and person of the king. It was so ordered by God's providence, that, very soon after he was thus called to the court, Daniel had the opportunity to recall to Nebuchadnezzar an important dream, which had gone from his recollection, and also to interpret it, when the wise men, astrologers and Chaldeans had utterly failed to do either. This was the dream narrated in the second chapter of Daniel, and known as that of the four kingdoms. For this interpretation Daniel was at once promoted to be ruler over the province of Babylon and governor, or chief, of the wise men of the court, and at his request, his three friends were also appointed to places of honor and trust.

Not long after this, but while Daniel was absent on some of his official duties, Nebuchadnezzar, whose tendency to idolatry was very strong, caused an immense image, about ninety feet in height and nine in its greatest breadth, and covered with zold, to be set up in the plain of Dura, and commanded that all the officers of his court and the people, who were assembled by scores of thousands, should fall down and worship the image, when the signal should be given by the musical instruments, under the penalty of being cast, on their refusal, into a burning fiery furnace. Here was an opportunity for Daniel's three young friends to show whether they were really the servants of the living and true God, or not. If they fell down and worshipped this image, they would disobey the first and second commandments; if they refused to do so, they would be cast into the fiery furnace. But they were God-fearing and holy men, and so they decided, at once, that they would not fall down and worship the image. King Nebuchadnezzar was very angry at their refusal, and ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual, and these three men to be bound and cast into it. The heat was so great, that the flames flashed out and burned to death the men who cast these three godly men into the furnace. But very soon after, Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed in astonishment that he saw four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth was like

the Son of God. The LORD Jehovah, our blessed Lord and Redeemer, had indeed appeared for his faithful servants, and by his mighty presence had prevented the flames from injuring them, or anything which belonged When, at Nebuchadnezzar's call, they came forth from this terrible furnace, not a hair of their heads was singed, nor was there the smell of fire upon their garments. Nebuchadnezzar now issued a decree, commending the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for universal worship throughout his realm; but he himself soon again lapsed into idolatry. In the fourth chapter we have another dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its This dream the wise men of Babylon were unwilling or unable to interpret, and again Daniel was called upon to explain its import, It foretold, that for his pride and arrogance, Nebuchadnezzar was to become insane, and be driven from men for seven years; that his kingdom was to be taken from him, and he would become a wanderer, entirely devoid of reason; but that at the end of the seven years, his reason was to be restored and his kingdom returned to him. This downfall of Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled a twelvementh later, and at the end of seven years he was restored to his kingdom, and we hope became a sincere worshipper of the true God for the remainder of his life. Within a few years past, there have been discovered some tablets of baked clay at Babylon, which contain the records of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as dictated by himself; and in these is contained this remarkable passage, which has no parallel in any of these royal records: "For four years (the numeral is somewhat doubtful—it may be four or seven), in all my dominions, I did not build a high place of power; the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up. In Babylon, buildings for myself and for the honor of my kingdom I did not lay out. worship of Merodach, my lord, the joy of my heart, in Babylon, the city of his sovereignty and the seat of my empire, I did not sing his praises, and I did not furnish his altars (with victims), nor did I clear out the canals." In no other instance in the whole range of cuneiform literature—that is, of these inscriptions upon tablets or stones, of this wedge-shaped or arrow-headed writing, which has been found in all cases to be the records of each monarch of his own doings-is there a description of what they failed to do; this evidently refers to the period when Nebuchadnezzar was it sane. of Nebuchadnezzar is said to have occurred 561 years B. C.; and he was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach. At the close of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel seems to have retired from official life, and the twentythree years which succeeded may have been passed in that quiet and prayerful intercourse with God which was his greatest delight. On that eventful night when Babylon was to be captured by the army of Cyrus, he was suddenly summoned again to the court, at the instance of the queen mother, to explain to her son Belshazzar, who reigned over Babylon, as joint king with



HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

his father Nabonedus, the portentous inscription traced, by an angelic finger, upon the wall of the banqueting house, and which had terrified the mad revellers.

He came, an old man, of certainly more than eighty years of age, yet, like

Moses, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated;" he waived aside the offer of the young monarch to make him the third ruler in the kingdom, himself being the second, for he had stood before mightier kings than Belshazzar; and after a stern rebuke to the royal reveller and his companions, for their defiance of God, and their pollution of the vessels sacred to his service, he announced, as the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall, that he, Belshazzar, was weighed in the balance and found wanting, that God had numbered and finished his kingdom, and that the Medes and Persians were to succeed to it. The same night the prophecy was ful-



DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

filled, and Daniel, though venerable for age, passed at once into the favor of the conqueror, and became the premier of his kingdom.

It pleased God once more to try the faith of his aged and beloved servant. The jealousy of his associates in the government led them to plot his destruction; and as their only "occasion against him was concerning the law of his God,"—a most noble testimony to the holiness and purity of his life—they united in a request to the king, to make an irrevocable decree, "that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of the king himself, should be cast into the den of lions." The

decree was issued, and Daniel, knowing its purport, "his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." His enemies, triumphant at the success of their scheme, immediately brought their accusations before the king, saying, in tones of the greatest contempt, "That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah"—not Daniel, the first president of the realm—"regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day." The eyes of the king were opened to their malicious purpose, too late; he struggled against the effect of his own act, till the going down of the sun, but his decree was irrevocable, and the attempt to set it aside might result in his own overthrow. He was compelled to execute it, but as he did so.

he said to the venerable servant of God, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." The God of Daniel did deliver him, and on the morning of the next day, the king, who had passed a wretched night, was earliest at the lions' den, and found Daniel safe. His foes were then consigned to the lions, "who brake all their bones in pieces ere they reached the bottom of the den." This miraculous deliverance brought Darius to acknowledge the God of Daniel, as the true and living God.

Daniel continued in power through the reign of Darius, and certainly to the third year of Cyrus, and was instrumental in influencing that monarch to fulfil the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, in not only permitting, but decreeing and aiding, the return of the Jews from their seventy years' captivity. We have no account of his death, but when it came, he was full of days and honors, and had seen the desires of his heart gratified. ters of the book of Daniel, from the seventh to the twelfth inclusive, record other visions of Daniel, similar in their general purport to that of Nebuchadnezzar, which he interpreted, but much more minute in their details. So exactly were these fulfilled, that an attempt has been made by rationalists in modern times to demonstrate that they must have been written by a false or spurious Daniel, about one hundred and sixty years before Christ, after the events prophesied, especially in regard to Antiochus Epiphanes, had But this effort is very foolish and wicked; for the Jews knew and quoted the Book of Daniel before that time; the Daniel of the Bible was known to be a holy and good man before the time specified, while such an impostor must have been a very bad and unworthy man; and our blessed Lord quotes from these very prophecies, as "the words of Daniel the prophet," and as inspired.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS AND PROPHETS OF JUDAH AND ISBAEL

Communication   District Accordance   Chinese   Chines	PROPRETS OF JUDAR.	Years Reigned.	TWENTY KINGS OF JUDAM.	dabut	dabut	dabol	fsarat	dabut. Isatel	MINETERN KINGS OF BRAKL.	Yours Beigned.	PROPHETS OF MEASURE.	MAY A SE
11   Reboboum   11   Reboboum   11   Reboboum   12   Reboboum   12   Reboboum   13   Reboboum   14   Anjura of Octobra of	Commenced to prophesy B. c.		Date of Accession.	Caber's	Creswell's Chros.	1	1 1	McClintock	Date of Accession.			
1	Shemalab, 973.	£#	Rebobosm.	915 — 975				5. C. 973	Jeroboam.		A man of God from	
## Jahenhapan.  ## Jahenhapan.	Oded, 250. Azariah, 940. Hauaul, 919.	<b>'</b> ‡		332 3				232 2	Nedeb. Bassba. Klab.		Abijah, 973. Jehu, son of Hanani,	
1 Abstract of Jorena of		#	Jehoshaphat.		ž	<u>~</u>			Zimri. Cmri. Abab.	ģna ·	Filjah, 912. Micelah, sb. 900.	
Company   Comp	Ellezer, 594. Jahaziel, 801.	8-19	Jehoram or Joram. Abaziah or Jehoahas. Athaifah.						Jeboran et Joran.	"#		Jehorum, king of Ju- dah, reigned 4 year with J. hoshaphat, an
	Zechariah, am of Je- hoida, ab. 630.	3 2	Jebonsh or Joneb.		£ 2				Jehu. Jehoshas. Jehosah or Joss	# ==	An unknown prophet. Joneb, ab. 639.	• 744.7
15   16   16   16   17   17   17   17   17	Sechariah, 2d, ab. 795. Joel, perhaps 800.	2	Ussiah or Azarlah.	-	ş			2 6	Jeroboam II. Zacharlah. Shallem	6 H 61	Hoses, ab. 825. Amos, ab. 800.	Interrognum in Israel for 11 years.
Herethh.   178   179	Issisb, ab. 739, prophesied for 64 years. Wheah, ab. 748, prophesied ab. 36 years.	22	Jotham. Abaz.		22		553	<b>1</b> 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Menahem. Pekahlah. Pokah.	2*8	Oded, ab. 750.	Anarchy is forced
2 mos.	Nahum, ab. 71	83*=	Hezekiah. Manaseh. Amon. Joseph		£833				Horber.	•		nome years. The ten tribes carried into captivity by Shallmanezer, E. c. 120.
Journ carried cap   488   58	aled for 41 years. Habbakult, 6.29. Zephaniah, 607. Kzeklei, 589. Daniel, ab. 606, prophesical for ab 71 yrs.	8 mos.	Johoshar or Shallum. Jebolaklim or Eliakim. Jebolachin Jeconiah or Conlah		38 55	1 88 55			The Kings	of Ju	idah and Isi	rael united
Governors of Jerusalem after the Captivity.  Zerubabai. 538  Kirz.  Secondari. 40 *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** ***	Obediek, sb. 588.		Judah carried cap- ) tive into Bahyi'n and )	•	<b>.</b>			3	Saul reigne	od 40 y	ears, beginning	B. C. 1093.
			Governors	of Jerusa	lem after	the Ca	ptivity		, pived		;	
			Zerubbabel. Rara. Nebemiah.	<b>3</b> 53	_			232 1				

# THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

The prophecies of these prophets are not called minor, because they are of inferior importance or less fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, than those which preceded them; but because they are briefer, and for the most part devoted to a single topic, usually that of the transgressions of Judah and Israel, though three or four of them consider only some foreign nation or city. They differ very much in their style; some using the language of every-day life, others dealing in the most pungent denunciation of the sins and vices of Israel and Judah, and others still, breaking forth in strains of the loftiest and most impassioned poetry. Some of these prophets deal almost entirely in symbolical actions, whose application is not difficult of explanation; others in visions, allegories or parables, while others still confine themselves to pure matters of fact; but all are in earnest in their utterances, and are evidently inspired of God to declare h's will. In many of them are found predictions of the coming of the Messiah, as clear and minute, though not as copious, as those of Isalah; and they thus aid in the preparation for the coming of Him, who, by His advent, was to falfil both the law and the prophets.

#### HOSEA.

TOSEA was the son of Beeri, and so far as we can judge from his style, and from his being sent at first to Israel, he must have been a native of the northern portion of the land of Israel, perhaps of Galilee, or of the northern portion of Ephraim's territory. As his prophetic life stretches over about sixty years, and extends a little beyond the carrying away captive of the ten tribes, it is generally supposed that his later years were spent in Judah and his later prophecies written there. Hosea was one of the symbolical prophets; he was required to do certain acts as signs to the Israelites of the way in which God regarded their behavior toward him. If the commands given to him in the first and third chapters were to be literally obeyed (and the passages seem to admit no other interpretation), his trials as well as those of several other prophets were very great, and only to be borne by the consciousness that he was thus obeying the will of God, and giving to his sinful fellow-countrymen one more warning and opportunity for repentance. Hosea was, during a part of his career, contemporary with Isaiah and with Micah and Amos.

The period during which he uttered his prophecies was one of terrible wickedness, corruption and depravity in Israel. The kingdom of Israel was rapidly tending to its utter downfall and extinction, and idolatry, theft, murder, and unbridled licentiousness, were universal. These sins the prophet rebukes with the utmost severity of denunciation, and in a style intensely

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concise, abrupt, but rugged and effective, though at times so obscure as to require very close study. It is pre-eminently the book for times of spiritual declension. It is usually divided into two sections—that from chapter first to the close of chapter third being symbolical, and that from chapter fourth to the end being prophetic and hortatory. The terrible denunciations are mingled with promises of blessing to the truly penitent.

#### JOEL.

TOEL'S prophecy, though comparatively short, is one of the most classical and beautiful of all the prophetic books. His description of the coming of the locusts, in the second chapter, is unrivalled in the poetry of Comparatively little is known of the history of this poetany language. His prophetic life is supposed to have been passed during the reign of Uzziah (810-758 B. C.), and two passages in his prophecy (chapter i. 15 and chapter iii. 16) have been borrowed, in the form of the thought at least, so closely by Isaiah and Amos, that he must have been very nearly a contemporary of theirs, though perhaps a few years earlier. The prophecy begins with a description, of remarkable vividness and beauty, of the destruction wrought by the locusts, and other insect plagues in Judah, and of the misery of drought and famine which had followed. These judgments are declared to have come upon the people for their sinfulness, and the prophet urges the necessity of speedy and thorough repentance, and declares that such repentance shall be followed by a restoration of their previous prosperity. Then looking forward over the time which should elapse before the coming of the Messiah, he predicts his advent and describes the blessed results of his reign, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, in the words which were quoted by Peter at that time. He depicts the gathering of the nations who had been the enemies of Judah, to receive the judgments which they deserved, but closes his prophecy with a glowing description of the glorious time when Jehovah should dwell in Zion.

#### AMOS.

THIS prophet, who was called to witness for God during the reign of Jeroboam II., the grandson of Jehu (about 800 B. C.), was not educated, like most of his fellow-prophets, in the schools of the prophets at Jericho, but was an humble herdsman or shepherd, and vine-dresser or fruit-gatherer of Tekoah, a town of Judah. He was probably contemporary with Hosea. His

language is less terse than that of Hosea, less sublime than that of Joel, but his style is clear, forcible, and in some passages grand, particularly in his description of the majesty and power of Jehovah. His illustrations are generally drawn from agricultural or pastoral life, but are very effective. missioned especially to rebuke the sins of Israel, he yet denounces, in chapters i. and ii., judgments on six other adjacent kingdoms, and then reproaches Israel and Judah in general terms. In chapters iii.-vi. he exposes and rebukes in detail the sins of Israel, and threatens them with the judgments of God. These prophecies of judgment, which were especially directed against the golden calves of Bethel and Dan, and their worship by Jeroboam II., excited the rage of Amaziah, Jeroboam's high priest, as we find in the seventh chapter, and after complaining to his master, he attempted to drive Amos back to Judah whence he had come; but the sturdy prophet defended his course as commanded by God, and predicted God's judgments upon Amaziah and his family. The Jewish tradition is that Amaziah and his fellow-priests drove Amos back to Judah, wounded and half dead, and that his subsequent prophecies were made at Tekoah. The last three chapters illustrate, by visions, the judgments of God upon Israel and Judah, and blend promises with threatenings. He closes with eloquent descriptions of the beneficent results of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom.

# OBADIAH.

THIS prophecy is the shortest book in the Old Testament, having only twenty-one verses. We know nothing more of Obadiah himself than what may be gathered from this book. From the references to the captivity, and to the speedy judgments which were to fall upon Edom or Idumea, we are driven to the conclusion that the captivity spoken of, was that of Judah in Babylon, which took place 586 B. C., when it is known that the Idumæans or Edomites, instead of aiding and succoring their kinsmen, the Jews, took advantage of their disasters from the siege and victory of Nebuchadnezzar to swoop down upon them and plunder the little that was left. The destruction prophesied by Obadiah did come upon the Edomites in large measure in the year 583 B. C., when Nebuchadnezzar swept through this whole region and conquered the Idumæans even in their mountain fastnesses. But it was at a later date, about 130 years before Christ, that John Hyrcanus, one of the Asmonæan princes, fulfilled the prophecy to its utmost extent, reducing the Idumæans to the most abject condition, and allowing them to

remain in their own country, only on condition of their being circumcised and accepting the Jewish rites. From this time their nationality was entirely lost.

The prophecy opens with a vivid and powerful denunciation of the Edomites, which is so similar to that of Jeremiah, xlix. 7-21, that it is evident that the two prophets had been in communication, as they very well might have been, being contemporaries. We are inclined to believe that Jeremiah's prediction was the earlier of the two. After denouncing the cruelty and bitterness of Edom, and prophesying the judgments of God which were soon to descend upon her, the prophet turns to the future glories of Zion after their return from captivity in Sepharad (a place in Babylonia), and their occupation of the whole territory of Edom, which was fulfilled.

The modern Jews profess to believe that by Edomites, in this prophecy, are meant Christians, over whom they are to triumph; but this is very absurd.

# JONAH.

JONAH was a prophet of Israel, and probably the earliest of the prophets whose predictions are recorded in a book form. He was the son of Amittai of Gath-hepher, and was born probably between 860 and 850 B. C. We learn from 2 Kings xiv. 25 that he had prophesied of the extension



ANCIENT SHIP-BUILDING.

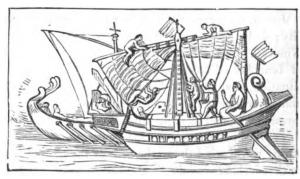
of the kingdom of Israel, subsequently accomplished under Jeroboam II., before this mission to Nineveh was committed to him. He was a timid, fretful, nervous man, and very bitter against the Assyrians, who he believed would yet destroy Israel. He tells us that God commanded him to go to Nineveh and

preach to the inhabitants of that city, which was the capital of the Assyrian empire; that instead of going there, he so disliked to deliver his message that he took a ship and sailed for Tarshish (Tartessus in Spain, perhaps),

which was a sad piece of folly, and he suffered, as all will more or less, for his disobedience to God. On his way to Tarshish, a tempest sprung up, and the mariners threw everything overboard to save their lives. Still the ship was in danger, and Jonah all this time was fast asleep, when they came and summoned him to awake. They then thought that they would cast lots, and see if they would point out any one in the ship who had displeased God. This thought was doubtless directed by God himself, that Jonah might be detected and punished. "The lot fell upon Jonah." Jonah then told who he was, and confessed what he had done: that he had run away from delivering God's message. The mariners were shocked, and they asked what they should do to him. He felt humble for his sin; and not wishing that they should perish with him, he desired them to cast him into the sea, and the sea would then be calm. These men seeing that the God of Israel was the true God, then prayed God to forgive them for throwing Jonah overboard, for it was not their wish to commit murder. Then they cast Jonah into the sea, and it "ceased raging," and they, with becoming gratitude, offered up sacrifice to God. Let us, like them, never forget the goodness of God in preserving us from extreme dangers.

Jonah, having been thrown overboard, did not perish, for we are told that "the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow" him up, and he remained

in his belly three days and three nights. This fish is, in our New Testament, called a whale; but it might there also be called in the English "a great fish;" for you must remember that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and the New in Greek, and that the English is only a translation.



ANCIENT SHIP.

God, who made the fish, could make it do as he pleased; and that God who made the prophet could as well preserve him in the fish as create him; and could as well restore him from the fish, as he can raise up the dead body from the grave.

Jonah was now commanded a second time to go to the great city of

Nineveh, and preach what God told him. So Jonah went, and he cried, as he passed along in the city, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

When the people heard Jonah, they believed he was a messenger from God; and they repented, and fasted, and turned from their wicked ways, and God spared them.

Jonah, instead of being delighted that the people believed his message, and that the city was spared, was mortified that his prophecy had not come to pass; but God never intended it should, if the people repented.

How much more tender-hearted is God than man! Even this prophet could have borne to see a whole city perish, rather than his prophecy should fail. Surely he ought rather to have been glad that God had made him the means of bringing these sinners to repentance. So Jonah said to God, he knew how very merciful He was, and, as he supposed He would not destroy the whole city, he did not like to deliver his message; that was the reason why he had run away; and now what he apprehended would be the case had really come to pass. Indeed the prophet was so vexed, that he asked God to let him die. But God was also merciful to the prophet, and did not grant his rash request. On the contrary, he condescended to reason with the angry man, and asked him, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

Jonah, however, still seemed to think that something might happen to the city; so he went out of it, and made a booth on a spot where he could see A booth differed from a tent, being made, not of cloth, but only of branches of trees, something like our arbors in our gardens. In this situation, God was still kind to him, and he caused a gourd to spring up and cover Jonah's booth; so that he was well protected in the day from the burning sun, and at night from the cold. Jonah was pleased at this comfort; but in the morning God caused a worm to destroy his gourd, and a strong warm wind drove the heat of the scorching sun full in Jonah's face, so that he became quite faint; and he said, "It is better for me to die than to live." The LORD said to Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" and the prophet, vexed, annoyed at the loss of this last comfort, and suffering very possibly from the scorching heat of the Assyrian sun, could only reply fretfully, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." This was not a right spirit for Jonah to manifest toward the LORD, who had so mercifully preserved and kept him; but the LORD had compassion on this nervous, irritable man, and condescended to show him how inconsistent he was: "Thou hast had pity," he said, "on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (that is, there was this number of infants in the city, who, at least, had not done wrong), and so, according to the usual estimate, there must have been a total population of at least six hundred thousand souls. God was too merciful to destroy the innocent with the guilty.

We know nothing of the history of Jonah after this, but this story of his, is full of instruction for us. We learn from it that it is of no use for us to try to run away from God or duty; that God can control all things, animate and inanimate, to accomplish the purposes of his will; that he had had thoughts of mercy toward these heathen Ninevites, hundreds of years before the coming of the Messiah; and that sincere penitence and trust in the mercy of God will avert great threatened dangers.

Some critics have attempted to throw discredit on this book, and have spoken of it as a fable; but this is very weak and very wicked. The narrative has every mark of truthfulness on its face; the heathen traditions of that region are definite and clear as to some occurrence of the sort at about that period; the name itself is nearly preserved; the Jews all testify to the authenticity and inspiration of the book; and our blessed Lord repeatedly referred to this incident of Jonah's three days' sojourn in the maw of the shark, as symbolical and typical of his own death and burial and resurrection. No! Jonah's story can no more be given up than the New Testament.

## MICAH.

THE prophet Micah was a native of Moresheth, a village of southern Judah, about twenty-eight miles southwest of Jerusalem. He is called from his birthplace Micah the Morasthite, and is to be distinguished from another and brave prophet of nearly the same name of Ahab's time, who was probably a native of the kingdom of Israel—Michaiah, or Micah, the son of Imlah. Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, perhaps from 748 to 712 B. C., about thirty-six years. Though his recorded prophecies are brief—only seven chapters—he was a prophet of high reputation in his day, the associate and contemporary of Isaiah, and a man of most fearless spirit. In Jeremiah xxvi. 18, nearly a hundred

years after his death, one of his prophecies is quoted by the elders of the people as an evidence of his courage. The passage in Micah iv. 1-4, which is substantially identical with Isaiah ii. 2-5, may have been a quotation from some older prophecy, used with a mutual understanding by both prophets. The first and second chapters contain a magnificent description of the coming of Jehovah to judge Israel and Judah for their idolatries; and a denunciation of the people for their refusal to repent or to be warned of the evil of their doings. This passage closes with a promise of future good if they would turn from their evil ways. The third, fourth and fifth chapters are addressed especially to the princes and heads of the people, rebuking them for their avarice, rapacity and perversion of justice, and a denunciation of the false prophets and priests who lay in wait to deceive. third chapter is contained the prophecy quoted in Jeremiah, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." But the prophet foresees that there shall be a return of prosperity to Zion when the people have been truly humbled and repented, and his glowing pictures of that blessed time are among the finest strains of Hebrew poetry. and seventh chapters contain an apparent controversy in dialogue form, between Jehovah and his people, in which he recounts his mercy to them, and pleads with them for their affectionate service. Their reply shows the materialism of their ideas, to which Jehovah opposes his requirement of a spiritual worship, and shows how gross is their disobedience. bewails the justice of Jehovah's indignation, but on the profession of repentance by the people, closes with a triumphal song of joy for their future deliverance.

# NAHUM.

THIS prophet is said to have been an Elkoshite, or native of Elkosh; there has been much dispute in regard to this place, some critics thinking it was in Assyria, where there is a village now called Alkush, in which the tomb of Nahum the prophet is shown; but this is too modern to be entitled to much credit; others suppose, and with more reason, that it was in Galilee, where Jerome was told that it was, and recent investigation leads to the belief that the original Elkosh was upon the site of Capernaum, that city having in the Aramaic language the name of Kepher, or Kefr Naum, which means the village of Nahum. He lived probably in the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah, prophesying from about 711 B. c. to 698 B. c. His only

prophecy which has come down to us is this one concerning Nineveh. It is really a grand epic poem, depicting with wonderful vividness and power, and with an onward rush which is irresistible, the incidents of the siege and destruction of the great city, and representing Jehovah as fully roused for its punishment for its wickedness, and as directing from heaven every stage of the assault and destruction. The overthrow of the Assyrian capital so forcibly portrayed in this prophecy was accomplished about eighty-five years later, and every prediction was fulfilled to the letter. The destruction of No-Ammon, or Thebes (populous No), referred to in the third chapter, had recently taken place when Nahum wrote, and a king of Assyria had destroyed it. The terrible outrages by which it had been made desolate were to be repeated upon Nineveh, and the prophet rejoices that the great enemy of Israel is doomed to such utter destruction for its great wickedness. Nahum is the only one of the minor prophets who makes no direct or indirect allusion to Christ.

#### HABAKKUK.

HABAKKUK was in all probability a Levite, and possibly a priest, as the arrangement of his prayer or psalm for chanting in the temple service would indicate. He prophesied shortly before the captivity of Jehoiakim, about 629 B. C., in the latter part of the reign of Josiah.

The prophecy is a very remarkable one in every respect. As a whole it is a poem of great power and beauty, beginning with a lamentation over the corruption and sinfulness of the people, followed by a revelation of the swift coming vengeance of God upon them for their sins, which is to be inflicted by the Chaldeans, a new foe; the prophet next describes this new enemy and their boastful impiety, but confident that God will punish them when be has used them as instruments of correction, hopefully awaits the issue. In the second chapter the LORD commands him to write out the doom of the Chaldeans, and the denunciations which the nations they have oppressed are pronouncing upon them. Their vices and cruelties are thus rehearsed, and the prophet pauses after this terrible arraignment and exclaims, "But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." Then follows that sublime psalm or ode in the third chapter, a composition unrivalled in any language for boldness of conception, sublimity of thought and majesty of diction. It should be read and re-read till it is learned by heart.

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#### ZEPHANIAH.

THIS prophet was probably of princely lineage, being, it is supposed, a great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, the good king of Judah. period of prophesying was brief, being between 630 and 625 B. C., as is indicated by the subjects of his prophecies. This was wholly within the reign of Josiah, and he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, who commenced his efforts to bring Judah to repentance about the same time. These two good men aided king Josiah very powerfully in his work of reform, but the whole nation was too corrupt for anything more than a superficial reformation, and Zephaniah was therefore commissioned of God to proclaim the coming judgments which should fall upon them for their great sinfulness. nunciations are accompanied by prophecies of the destruction of adjacent nations who were guilty of the same sins, and at the close the prophet predicts the blessings which God would bestow upon the remnant of his people who should return after their captivity, and these blessings, which should make Zion a praise in the whole earth, evidently refer to the coming of the Messiah.

## HAGGAI.

TAGGAI, like Zechariah and Malachi, was a prophet of the restoration, or return from the Babylonian captivity. The date of his prophecies is 520 B. C., sixteen years after the return under Zerubbabel. He and Zechariah are mentioned in Ezra as having powerfully aided Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, in stimulating the people to complete the second temple. His arguments were varied, now inveighing against their selfishness and indolence in withholding their labors from this all important work, anon demonstrating to them that their poverty and distress was a judgment of God upon them for their neglect. and again promising to them rich blessings if they went forward in this good work. Haggai and Zechariah are believed to have been the authors, or at least the editors of several of the Psalms, which were arranged for use in the service of the second temple, particularly Psalms exi., exxv., exxvi., exxxvii.. cxlv.-cxlviii. He is mentioned not only in Ezra but in several of the apocryphal books, and there is a quotation from Haggai ii. 6, in Hebrews xii. 26.

#### ZECHARIAH.

THIS prophet calls himself the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, while in Ezra he is called the son of Iddo; but this was the custom of the Jews, who often spoke of the grandfather or even a remoter ancestor, as the father, if he was more distinguished than the actual father. already said, Zechariah and Haggai lived and labored at the same time, about 520 years before Christ. There is some reason for believing that Zechariah was a priest, and that his influence over the priests was very powerful. The first eight chapters of the prophecy are devoted to the same general object as the prophecy of Haggai, viz.: the urging forward of the completion of the temple. The last six chapters are different in style from the first eight, are symbolical in their character, and contain many predictions which are generally and justly supposed to refer to the coming of the Messiah. One passage, Zech. xi. 13, is quoted, though not exactly, in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10; but is there said to be from Jeremy, the prophet. Jeremiah has much to say of the potter in chapters xviii. and xix. of his prophecy, but nothing of the thirty pieces of silver. But there is an evident connection between these words of Zechariah and Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the potter, and some suppose that this chapter xi. of Zechariah may have really been one of Jeremiah's prophecies, which was not found till after the return from captivity, and being approved by Zechariah, became incorporated into his prophecy. This seems more probable from what Jerome, a Christian father of the third century after Christ, says in regard to this passage, that a Jewish Christian in Judea presented to him an apocryphal book of Jeremiah, in which the passage was word for word as it is in Matthew. Somecritics have supposed that these last six chapters, or at least a part of them, may have been written by that prophet Zechariah who is spoken of in 2 Chronicles xxvi. 5, as living in the reign of Uzziah (about 760 B. C.), and of whom it is said "he had understanding in the visions of God," and that the two Zechariahs were confounded by some later editor; and such passagesas ix. 13, and x. 7, make this theory possible. Some of the predictions of the prophet concerning the Messiah are very beautiful, and were strikingly fulfilled.

## MALACHI.

NOTHING is known of the personal history of this prophet, and the time in which he prophesied is only known from the internal evidence, and from a comparison of his prophecy with the last chapters of

Nehemiah. Nenemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, and his second term of service as Tirshatha or Governor over the Jews, according to the most authentic records, seems to have been about 408 B. C., and between that time and 406 B. c. this prophecy of Malachi was probably delivered. God had raised him up to aid Nehemiah in bringing back the people, but more especially the priests, from their corrupt and wicked practices, and the gross sins into which they had fallen, and to restore a holy and pure worship. priests were very greedy of gain, and would not perform the slightest service at the temple without being paid for it; they substituted the blind. sick, lame and diseased animals for the perfect ones brought for sacrifice. though they knew this was strictly forbidden; they divorced their Hebrew wives, and married, often several heathen women, idolaters, in their places: and they sought to bring the worship of Jehovah into contempt. During his first administration, twenty-four years before, Nehemiah had broken up these evil practices, but they had been resumed by the priests, and now Malachi joins his power to that of Nehemiah, denouncing God's judgments upon them for their sins. But this prophecy is rich in its predictions of good as well as of evil; and of good to the whole family of man. Among these are the following: chapter i. 11, "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts."

In the third chapter, first verse, and in the fourth chapter, fifth and sixth verses, the coming of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ, is clearly and explicitly prophesied; and in the first, second and third verses of the third chapter, and in the second and third verses of the fourth chapter the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, and his work and its joyous and blessed results, are predicted; and we are told more plainly than anywhere else in the Old Testament, that the Messiah is the Lord Jehovah, the Messenger or Angel of the Covenant, Jehovah God. This passage, chapter iii. 1, is a conclusive proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. We have also in chapter iii. 16, 17, a great encouragement to religious worship and religious meetings, in the prophet's declaration of the Lord's interest in those who fear him and think upon his name.

The prophecy, though a short one, is full of precious truth and promises, and worthily closes the Old Testament.

We have thus endeavored to show you that what we told you in our

introductory chapter to the Old Testament was true—that the great object and aim of all the books of this Old or former Testament have for their end and aim to trace the lineage, and prepare the way, for the coming of Him who was, and was to be, "the Desire of all nations," Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

There are a number of books, written mostly between the time of the prophecies of Malachi and the advent of Christ, which, though generally of a religious character, are not considered, except by the Roman Catholic Church, as divinely inspired; though the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country accord to them a spiritual value, and have them bound up in some of their Bibles. These books, taken together, are known as the APOCRYPHA, though they do not include all the apocryphal books.

# THE APOCRYPHA.

THE word APOCRYPHA means "secret things." This name was given at first to books which professed to be sacred, but were not generally regarded as such; because many of these books had claimed to contain certain secret or mystical ideas, words or legends, which could be understood only by those who were specially instructed therein. As these claims were generally untrue, the word "Apocrypha" came to mean "spurious writings," and as these books, which were all written between 250 B. C. and 30 B. C., were "spurious" in the sense of not being written by their alleged authors, and for the most part did not contain authentic history, they came to be called "The Apocrypha." Four of the books, viz., Judith, Tobit, First Maccabees, and Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, were originally written in Hebrew, or perhaps Aramaic, the language of the Jews after the captivity; these were translated into Greek. The other ten books were written in Greek, and were composed by some Alexandrian Jews, who, for one reason or another, desired to add something to the books of the Old Testament. None of these books were ever recognized by the Jews of Palestine as forming any part of the Old Testament, but the Alexandrian Jews, and the other Jews of the dispersion, for whom the Old Testament had been translated into Greek by seventy-two learned men (this translation is often called The Septuagint, which means "Seventy"), added most of these spurious books to the translation. After the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostles and the Hebrew Christians never recognized these apocryphal books, and many of the Christian fathers rejected them. After long discussion in several councils, the Roman Catholic Church' received them, except the two books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, as a part of the Bible; but the Greek Church rejected them, though regarding some of them as good books for instruction, but not of authority. Lutherans hold that they are not inspired, but yet profitable, and the Church (550)

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of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States take substantially the same view. Other Protestant churches reject them entirely.

The character of these books is very diverse; some of them contain wise and good thoughts, very well expressed, though not comparable to similar books of the Old Testament; such are the Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus; some contain historical narratives, either like the first book of Esdras, compiled from Nehemiah, Ezra and Chronicles, or the work of some chronicler of his own times, like the first book of Maccabees, which contains some veritable history; others, like the second book of Esdras, the rest of the chapters of the book of Esther, and the second book of Maccabees, though professing to be historical, are mere trash, and of no value or authority whatever. Baruch is a pretended prophecy, but is mostly borrowed from Jeremiah; the Prayer of Manasses is sufficiently penitent, but is undoubtedly spurious. Tobit, Judith, the Song of the Three Children, the History of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, are all oriental fictions, and most of them very poor and absurd fictions. Taken as a whole, it may be said that those, whose Bibles do not contain the Apocrypha, suffer no loss.

There are several other of these apocryphal books written within a century and a half before the birth of Christ, some of which possess considerable merit, though attributed to authors who could not possibly have written them; but which, for some reason, failed to be included in the collection, which we know as the Apocrypha. Among these were "The Book of Enoch," to which reference is made in the Epistle of Jude, and which, though based on an older tradition, was probably first issued as a whole about one hundred and ten years before Christ; "The Book of Jubilees," from 110 B. C. to 64 B. C.; "The Jewish Sibylline Books," about 140 B. C.; and "The Psalms of Solomon," about 40 B. C. Of these, all except the Jewish Sibylline Books were probably written in Palestine, and although spurious, so far as their professed authors were concerned, they manifest, for the most part, a penitent and devotional spirit, and throw much light on the religious condition of the Jews of that day, and on their expectations of the coming of the Messiah. Nevertheless, "we have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

# HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

From the Captivity to the Destruction of Jerusalem.

HAT is known in Jewish history as "the captivity" was not accomplished in a single mouth or year. The first, though not perhaps the largest, company of captives was taken from Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim, 606 B. C., when Daniel and others were carried away: the second at the commencement of the reign of Jehoiachin over Judah, B. C. 599. At this time many of the princes of the royal family, and the greater part of the nobles and priests, were among the captives. Zedekiah, a feeble

prince, was left in charge of the kingdom as a vassal, or tributary of the king of Babylon. He, after a time, rebelled, trusting to receive aid from the king of Egypt. In 588 B. C., eleven years later, Nebuchadnezzar returned, besieged Jerusalem, captured it, and, having slain the sons of Zedekiah in his presence, put out his eyes, and carried him and all the more wealthy and influential of his people captives to Babylon. There still remained, however, a considerable body of people, of the middle and lower classes in Judsea, who tilled the soil, dressed the vines, cared for the olive crops, and reared their scanty herds. These were under the care and superintendence of one of Nebuchadnezzar's officers, but were directly governed by one of their own countrymen, Gedaliah, whom, however, one of the princes of the royal family, Ishmael, soon after assassinated, when a large body of these Jews fled into Egypt.

Six years later, in 582 B. C., a fourth deportation of the inhabitants of Judæa was made at the direction of Nebuchadnezzar; and thus the land was left almost without inhabitant. This captivity was not one of so great suffering as would perhaps be supposed; many of the Jews lived in comfort in Babylonia, and some of them were advanced to positions of high (552)

responsibility. Their temple was destroyed, it is true, and their opportunities for religious worship were but few; but they had not prized their privileges in their own land, but had followed after all the idolatries of the heathen. Now they mourned over their wickedness, and many of them abandoned idols forever, and taught their children to do so. question that the Jews in exile were a much more godly and righteous nation, than they had ever been in their own land. Forty-four years after the last deportation, and sixty-eight after the first, when Daniel and his companions were carried captive, in 538 B. C., the Babylonian kingdom fell before the army of Cyrus, and the captive Jews and their descendants became the subjects of the Medo-Persian empire. Two years later, in 536 B. c., when Daniel's seventy years were accomplished, Cyrus, having probably been informed of the prophecies which had been uttered by Isaiah concerning him, two hundred and thirty years before, and perhaps also prompted by the aged Daniel, who was his prime-minister, issued his decree for the return of the Jews into their own land, and for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem; for this purpose, he bestowed upon the Jewish leaders vast sums of money, and the precious vessels of the former temple. But seventy years of exile had wrought great changes among the captives; most of those who had come to Babylonia as captives had died; their children had been born in the land where they were, and though they had been taught to pray toward, and for, Jerusalem, yet they had but slight attachments there. The exiles had numbered hundreds of thousands; those who returned at this time were not quite fifty thousand, all told; but among them were many choice spirits, such men as Zerubbabel, their chief, one of the royal lineage of David; Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high-priest, and many others, like minded.

The first care of these returned exiles was to rebuild the temple; and they had made commendable progress in this work, when the death of Cyrus, 529 B. C., and the representations of their enemies to his successors caused the work to cease. At the accession of Darius the Persian (Darius Hystaspes), 521 B. C., the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to go on again with the rebuilding of the temple. Application was made by their enemies to Darius to prohibit this work, but his answer was positive and decided that they should be allowed to go on, and aided in carrying out the decree of Cyrus, and that these Samaritan rulers should render them ample assistance, from the tribute due to the king, and should also furnish them the animals needed for sacrifice. Thus helped and encouraged, the Jewish

leaders pressed forward to the completion of their work, and in 515 B. c., twenty years after its commencement, the second temple was dedicated.

It was not, however, till long after this time, that the Jews were allowed to rebuild the walls of their city. In the year 457 B. C., Ezra, the learned scribe and priest and the historian of his nation, was sent by Artaxerxes Longimanus to visit Jerusalem; and was armed with authority to rectify a l abuses and to govern the people. Nearly 2,000 Jews, many of them of priestly families, went with him, and he was intrusted with a large amount of money, and golden and silver vessels for the use of the temple, value of these has been variously estimated; the lowest valuation exceeding four millions of dollars. Ezra did all that he could, but he was a scholar. a priest, and not a man of affairs; and after thirteen years of his administration, there were still gross abuses, and the walls were not built. xerxes then sent Nehemiah, his cup-bearer, a man of deep and earnest piety. but also a man of great executive ability, who came to Jerusalem with the authority of a Tirshatha or governor, and by his zeal, tact, and courage, the walls were completed, the temple worship organized, and evils and abuses corrected, although the jealousy and enmity of the Samaritans were constantly exerted to their injury.

Nehemiah returned to Persia, to resume his duties at the court, about 435 B. C., but after the lapse of some years, possibly as many as twenty-four, he visited Jerusalem again, to find that the old sins and crimes were again rife; that his old enemies, the Samaritans and Ammonites, had gained a foothold in Jerusalem, and even in the temple; and that Eliashib, the high-priest, and one of his grandsons were allied with them in marriage. He found also that the temple tithes were not paid; that very many of the people had married heathen and idolatrous wives; and that there was a general falling away from the pure worship of Jehovah. Though an old man, yet with the assistance of the prophet Malachi, he succeeded in reforming these grievous errors, and at his death left the people in a better condition, spiritually and temporally, than they had been since their return from exile.

Still the people, as well as their leaders, were perverse, and ready at the first opportunity to lapse into the crimes which had polluted their national life before the captivity, and they needed and received abundant chastisement, during the four hundred and seventy years which followed before their existence as a nation was blotted out by the Romans. There was little desire on their part to have kingly government again; they had felt too

severely the oppression of their monarchs in former times: but from the restoration from captivity onward to the time of Herod, their high-priests were their potential rulers. At times these were princes as well as priests: military leaders, as well as the representatives of Him who was to come. and make the atonement once for all; but not by their own will did they acknowledge any ruler as of higher authority than their own high-priest:. Yet during most of this time they owed allegiance to one or another foreign power—to the Persians till the end of the Persian empire under Darius Codomannus, 331 B. C.; to the Greek empire in Asia (Alexander the Great and his successors), from 331 to 167 B. C.; to their own Asmonæan princes, with varied fortunes, during which they were now under Syrian, now under Egyptian, and anon under Roman rulers, from 167 to 63 B. C.; and finally under Antipater, Herod and his descendants, from 63 B. C. to A. D. 70, the Romans during most of this period maintaining a controlling authority, and looking upon the family of Herod as vassals whom they could remove at pleasure. The seventy years, more or less, from the time of Nehemiah to the end of the Persian empire, were not marked by many prominent events; the mild administration of the Persian satraps gave them ample opportunity for the development of their internal resources, and their religious institutions. The high-priests during this time were, possibly, Eliashib, certainly Joiada, Jonathan or Johanan, and Jaddua. It was a son of Joiada, called Manasseh by the Jews, who had married, in Nehemiah's time, the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, the Samaritan chief. For this offence, Nehemiah expelled him from Jerusalem. He went at once to his Samaritan friends, carrying with him, it is said, a copy of the Pentateuch, or the Books of the Law. This was probably the first copy of the Pentateuch which the Samaritans had had, and from it, though the text was frequently tampered with, the various copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch have been made. Manasseh was made the high-priest of the Samaritans, by his father-in-law, Sanballat, and worship according to the law, established on Mount Gerizim. About 400 B. C., or perhaps a little later, Manasseh obtained permission from Darius Nothus to erect a temple on Mount Gerizim, and the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans became thenceforth more bitter than ever. Samaritans had fabricated traditions, which represented them as being the genuine descendants of Jacob, and branded the Jews as impostors; they claimed, when it suited their purpose, to keep the law more strictly than the Jews, and once or twice defiled the temple at Jerusalem with dead men's bones. There was no limit to the hatred of the one nation for the other, and, in many instances, this hatred led to bloodshed and murder. Jonathan, another son of Joiada, was high-priest for thirty-two years of this period of seventy, and was the first, though by no means the last, of these priestly rulers, who imbrued his hands in a brother's blood. Suspecting his brother Joshua of an intention to obtain the high-priesthood, through the favor of Bagoas, the Persian satrap, Jonathan slew him in the temple. This was about 366 B. C. Bagoas avenged the murder by imposing a tax of fifty shekels (\$26.50) on every lamb offered in sacrifice, and entered the temple, and the Jews said polluted it, with his presence; but in reply to their protests he asked them the very pointed question, "Am I not purer than the dead body of him whom ye have slain in the temple?"

But the days of the Persian empire were numbered. Alexander the Great had started on his career of conquest, which was to extend over all the known empires of the East, about 333 B. C. He was besieging Tyre, in 332 B. C., when he sent to Jerusalem to demand the submission of the Jews. Their high-priest, Jaddua, the son of Jonathan, made answer that they were the faithful vassals of Darius. Alexander was angry, and having reduced Tyre, he followed the coast to Gaza, the old capital of the Philistines, and then a large city, which he captured, and marched against Jerusalem. The high-priest caused the city to be hung with garlands, and forming a procession of the priests in their sacred robes, and of the people in white garments, went forth at their head in the magnificent dress of the highpriests, to Sapha, an eminence southwest of the city, to meet the conqueror. On meeting him, Alexander fell prostrate in adoration, and rising embraced the high-priest. Turning to his friend Parmenio he explained that he worshipped, not the priest, but the NAME OF JEHOVAH engraved on his frontlet; and that he recognized in him a figure that had appeared to him in a vision in Macedonia, and had bidden him to conquer Persia. Entering Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice, and was shown the prophecies of Daniel relating to himself. He granted the Jews, not only in Judæa, but in Media and Babylonia also, the free enjoyment of their own laws, and exemption from tribute during the Sabbatic year. This account, for which we are indebted to Josephus, has been discredited by some of the critics, but is substantiated in so many points by contemporary writers, that it seems worthy of belief. The Samaritans claimed the same privileges as the Jews, but Alexander, after a careful scrutiny of their pretensions, refused to grant Thereupon they murdered the Macedonian governor. their requests.



THE HIGH PRIEST IN ROBES.

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Andromachus, burning him alive, and Alexander retaliated by destroying Samaria.

Jaddua was succeeded by his son, Onias I., in the high-priestly office, about 330 B. C., and Palestine remained quiet until the death of Alexander, 323 B. C.; but after that event it became the prey of the contending forces of Egypt and Syria. At first it was assigned to Syria, and was regarded as a part of the kingdom of Laomedon, but in 320 B. C. he was dispossessed by Ptolemy Lagus, the powerful king or satrap of Egypt, who assaulted Jerusalem, on the Sabbath, when the Jews would offer no resistance. He carried off a large number of Jewish and Samaritan captives (some say 100,000) to Alexandria, where he gave them full citizenship; and many others migrated to Egypt of their own accord.

During the next twenty years, Palestine was alternately the prize of victory to Antigonus and Ptolemy, though the battles were mainly fought on the sea-coast, and for the strong cities of Gaza, Joppa, and Tyre; Jerusalem being out of the line of march of the combatants. In 301 B. c., after the battle of Ipsus, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria were assigned to Ptolemy, and became dependencies of Egypt; to which they continued in allegiance for about a century.

Simon I., surnamed the Just, succeeded Onias I., as high-priest, in 300 B. C., and continued in office for eight years. This was the golden period of The tendencies to idolatry were very thoroughly high priestly rule. eradicated, and while Greek art and Greek culture had, to some extent, liberalized and enlarged the minds of the Judæan Hebrews, as they had, in a still greater degree, those of Alexandria and other lands, they had not led them away from the purity of their faith, or their reverent worship of the God of their fathers. The canon, or list of inspired books which composed the Old Testament, was at this time thoroughly settled, and copies of the law, the prophets, and the poetical books or "writings," were multiplied, until there were copies in every synagogue, and in most of the wealthier families. The worship of the temple was maintained in its purity, and the altars daily smoked with the sacrifices, which were offered by willing The three great feasts were maintained each year, and Jews from Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and other lands came up to Jerusalem to The temple revenues were large; the priesthood intelligent. and devoted to their duties, and the people more devout than at any previous time.

Eleazar, the brother of Simon the Just, succeeded him 292 B. C., and ruled

for forty-one years, during which Judea was profoundly tranquil, under the mild government of Ptolemy Soter, and his son Ptolemy Philadelphus, who reigned from 285 to 247 B. C. It was during the reign of this latter monarch, and probably commencing about 280 B. C., that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which we know as the Septuagint, was made. Although we cannot receive, as correct, all the traditions and legends of the Jewish writers on this subject, it is certain that the translation was made from the Hebrew, at about this time, by learned Jews, mostly resident at Alexandria; and that this translation, though marred by slight errors, was, in the main, a faithful representation of the original Hebrew text, and as such, was constantly quoted by our Saviour, the apostles, and the early church; and that in consequence of its translation and wide diffusion among Jews, and proselytes to the Jewish faith in all lands (the Greek being at this time the language universally spoken throughout the then known world), the conversion of the nations to Christianity was greatly aided and promoted. President Edwards, in his "History of the Work of Redemption," makes special mention of this, as one of the most effective means of the promulgation of Christianity.

But these times of peace and prosperity were too good to continue long. Eleazar was succeeded by his brother Manasseh till 240 B. C., when Onias II., a weak and incapable son of Simon the Just, and at this time between sixty and seventy years of age, became high-priest. His most conspicuous failing seems to have been avarice, and this led him to neglect to pay the very moderate annual tribute (about \$33,000) of the temple to the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Euergetes. This avarice caused an interruption of the kindly feeling which had existed between the Egyptian kings and the Jews for more than sixty years. The adroitness of his nephew, Joseph, who not only appeased the anger of the king, but succeeded in obtaining for himself the farming of the revenues of Palestine, Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria (offering to pay the king more than twenty-six millions of dollars annually), averted the peril for the time, but a few years later swift destruction came upon this family of the high-priests.

Onias II. died 226 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Simon II., a judicious and faithful priest, but one who lived in troublous times. *Ptolemy IV. Philopator* had succeeded to the Egyptian throne, and Antiochus the Great, the ablest of the Syrian kings of the family of the Seleucidæ, thought it a good opportunity to recover Phænicia, Cæle-Syria, and Palestine. He was defeated by Ptolemy, at Raphia, near Gaza, 217 B. C. After this vic-

tory, Ptolemy went to Jerusalem, and attempted to force his way into the Holy of Holies, but was driven out by a supernatural terror. On his return to Egypt, he gave vent to his resentment, by a cruel persecution of the Jews at Alexandria, by which he alienated the entire Jewish nation from their allegiance to him. Ptolemy Philopator died 205 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Ptolemy V. Epiphanes, who was only five years old; and Antiochus the Great again attempted, and this time successfully, the capture of Cœle-Syria and Palestine. The war between him and Scopas, Ptolemy's general, raged severely for seven years, and Judæa suffered terribly during the contest; but in the end she welcomed Antiochus as a deliverer. granted the Jews an annual sum for the sacrifices, and forbade foreigners to enter the temple. In the same year (198 B. c.) Onias III. succeeded his father Simon II. as high-priest. The provinces, conquered by such a lavish expenditure of blood and treasure, were nominally restored to Ptolemy Epiphanes, as the dowry of his bride Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, but the wily Syrian king concluded to hold them in trust for his daughter. He died in 187 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Scleucus IV. Philopator, whose representative in the expenditure of the annual sum allowed for the sacrifices, one Simon, a Benjamite, fomented a quarrel with the high-priest, and at last prompted a Syrian to seize the treasures of the temple. This attempt was frustrated, Jewish traditions say miraculously; but more probably by the determined resistance of the priests.

Scleucus Philopator died 175 B. C., and was succeeded by his brother, Antiochus IV. Epiphanes, or, as he was more appropriately named, Epimanes, or the madman, whose name has come down to posterity as the rival in infamy of those of Nero, and Ivan the Terrible.

In the beginning of his reign a feud broke out between the high-priest Onias III., and his three unscrupulous and wicked brothers—Joshua, who had changed his name to Jason, Menelaus, originally Onias, and Lysimachus. Jason proved himself a traitor to his family and nation, offering an enormous bribe and promises of annual tribute to Antiochus, to induce him to oust Onias III., and grant him the high-priesthood; surrendering the privileges of free worship obtained from former kings; training the Jewish youth in the athletic games of the Greeks, and encouraging the worship of the Tyrian Hercules. His brother Menelaus, three years later, outbid him and obtained the high-priesthood, selling the sacred vessels of the temple to obtain the money to pay his bribes. His elder brother, Onias III., charged him with the sacrilege, and Menelaus caused him to be put to death. A civil war

followed; Menelaus fled, but returned to Jerusalem, where Jason attacked him, and drove him into the citadel, but having to fly in turn, he escaped at first to the Ammonites and afterward to Sparta, where he perished.

Antiochus Epiphanes was now called to Jerusalem by Menelaus, under the pretence that Judæa had revolted. He came, took the city by storm, slaying 40,000 persons, a large proportion of them women and children, and as many more were sold as slaves. Then, guided by the base Menelaus, he entered the temple, profaned the altar, by the sacrifice of a swine, and having caused part of its flesh to be boiled, he sprinkled the broth over the whole sanctuary, and polluted the Holy of Holies with filth. He carried off the sacred vessels and other treasures, to the amount of about three millions of dollars. The Samaritan temple was profaned in the same way; and Antiochus returned to Antioch, leaving a savage Phrygian named Philip as governor at Jerusalem, and Andronicus, a base and covetous wretch, as ruler at Gerizim.

But this fiend in human form had not yet satisfied the malice of his evil nature. Two years later, in 168 B. C., he was driven out of Egypt by the Romans, and, partly from rage at his discomfiture, partly from a fear that the Romans might weaken his kingdom, by fomenting insurrection in Judæa, but, more than all, from the malignity and depravity of his disposition, he resolved to exterminate the Hebrew race from the face of the eartly. He intrusted the execution of this sanguinary purpose to Apollonius, one of his creatures, who had always been noted for his enmity to the Jews; and he could not have found a more willing, more cruel, or baser tool for the work. Apollonius waited for the Sabbath, when all the people were occupied with their religious duties, and then let loose his soldiers against the unresisting multitude, slew all the men, till the streets ran with blood, and seized all the women as captives. He proceeded to pillage, and then to dismantle the city, which he set on fire in many places; he threw down the walls, and built a strong fortress on the highest part of Mount Sion, which commanded the temple and all the rest of the city. From this garrison he harassed all the people of the country, who came in to look fondly upon the ruins, or to offer a stealthy worship in the sanctuary. These were slain without mercy.

But the infamous malignity of the persecutor did not end with these cruelties. Antiochus had not only vowed to exterminate the Hebrew race, but also to destroy every vestige of the Hebrew religion. He accordingly issued an edict commanding uniformity of worship throughout his dominions, and requiring that this uniformity should consist in the worship of the most revolting and licentious of the gods of Greece. The temples were to be consecrated to Jupiter in some of his grosser manifestations; and with true Syrian depravity, the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth was to be renewed under the Greek names of Dionysus or Bacchus, and of Venus Anadyomene. One Athenæus, an aged man, but a fanatic in this idolatrous worship, was charged with the duty of carrying into effect this iniquitous decree. The Samaritans submitted without any opposition, and their temple on Mount Gerizim was formally consecrated to Jupiter Xenius. Proceeding thence to Jerusalem, Athenæus, with the assistance of the garrison, prohibited and suppressed every observance of the Jewish religion, forced the people to profane the Sabbath, to eat swine's flesh and other unclean food, and expressly forbade the national rite of circumcision. The temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius; the statue of that deity was erected on part of the altar of burnt-offerings, and sacrifice duly performed. abomination that maketh desolate was set up, the sanctuary was polluted, and the daily sacrifice taken away." The solemn feasts of Passover and Pentecost, and the rejoicing gathering of the harvest festival or feast of tabernacles, were prohibited; the debauching and unclean orgies of the Bacchanalia, and the worship of Venus, substituted for them; while the Jews were compelled to carry the ivy, and join in the degrading and polluting worship of these heathen divinities.

Yet in this time of the trial of their faith, there were not wanting those who preferred death, even with the severest tortures, to the abandonment of their religion; "who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." In the noble army of martyrs, who stand before the throne of God, and serve him day and night, will most assuredly be reckoned the brave women who, defying the tyrant's command, circumcised their children, and were led around the city with their babes hanging to their breasts, and then cast headlong from the wall; the aged Eleazar, a venerable scribe, who, bending under the weight of ninety years, sooner than even to appear to eat swine's flesh, gave his body to the torture, saying that he "desired to leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the honorable and holy laws," and who, with his expiring breath, uttered this noble testimony: "It is manifest unto Jehovah, that hath the holy knowledge, that whereas I might have been delivered from death, I endure sore pains in my body by being beaten; but in soul, am well content to suffer these things because I fear

Him." Nor shall that heroic mother and her seven sons be forgotten, among those of whom the world was not worthy; who were brought into the king's own presence, and having refused to eat swine's flesh, were put to death, with the most cruel tortures; and who, from the eldest to the youngest, displayed not only constancy but triumph; and the mother, after encouraging each in his turn, herself suffered last.

But God, the God of Israel, saw and knew all the sorrows and sufferings of his people; he desired to bring them into closer union with himself, to banish from their hearts, not only all tendencies to idolatry, but those other sins, to which they were most strongly inclined—the greed of gain, pride, haughtiness, and lust; and to prepare them for the coming of his Son, who should be the Prince of Peace, the King who should sit upon the throne of his father David, and rule over a spiritual Zion. In the past, he had wrought miracles for their deliverance; now he was about to raise up deliverers of their own countrymen, and endow them with wisdom and grace, to accomplish his purposes of mercy.

The emissaries of Antiochus and his lieutenant Athenœus were active and persistent in their determination to extinguish, everywhere, the traces of the Jewish religion; and they penetrated into all the towns of Judgea, with their bands of soldiers, and compelled the people to eat swine's flesh, and to offer sacrifices to idols. Among the places thus visited was Modin, a town on an eminence on the road to Joppa, near the city of Lydda, the present Ludd, about twenty miles from Jerusalem, and commanding a view of the Mediterranean. In this town lived Mattathias, a man of the priestly line of Joarib, of great dignity and piety; and, though himself advanced in years, having five sons in the prime of life, and in character and ability worthy of such a father. Their names were Johanan, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan. When Apelles, the officer of Antiochus, arrived at Modin, he made splendid offers to Mattathias, as a man of great influence, to induce him to consent to abandon his faith, and lead others to submit to the royal Mattathias not only rejected very promptly all his advances, but publicly avowed his determination to live and die in the faith of his fathers; and when an apostate Jew was about to offer sacrifice to the heathen deity, the old priest, in a transport of indignant zeal, struck him dead upon the He then fell upon the king's commissioner, Apelles, put him to death, and summoned all the citizens, who were zealous for the law, to follow him to the mountains. Their numbers rapidly increased; but the Syrian troops having surprised a thousand of them in a cave, attacked them

on the Sabbath day, and meeting with no resistance, slew them without mercy. Thenceforth, Mattathias and his followers asserted the legality of defensive warfare on the Sabbath day, and acted upon it.

Under the guidance of the wise Mattathias, the insurgents against the atrocious tyranny of Antiochus manifested equal enterprise and discretion. Collecting their forces in the mountain fastnesses, so abundant in Judæa, they descended upon the towns; destroyed the heathen altars; enforced circumcision; punished all apostates who fell into their hands; recovered many copies of the law, which their enemies had wantonly defaced; and re-established the synagogues for public worship—the temple being defiled, and in the possession of the enemy. But the age of Mattathias was ill-suited to this active and laborious warfare; and having bequeathed the command to Judas, the third but most valiant of his sons, he sank under the weight of years and toil, with his hopes unfulfilled, and his country as yet unredeemed from the power of the tyrant.

Among those who rallied under the banner of Mattathias and his sons. the bravest and most zealous were the austere and abstemious Chasidim the holy, who adhered strictly to the letter and spirit of the law, but added to it the traditions and observances of the fathers, or what was called the oral law. Subsequently these took upon themselves the name of Pharisees, and were known by that name when our Lord was upon the earth. At that time they had lapsed into formalism, and a most odious self-righteousness, but though they had existed in small but increasing numbers, since the Babylonish captivity, they were, in the time of Mattathias and his sons, the best patriots and the most earnest and devoted servants of God in the Jewish nation, and they constituted a majority of the people. Zudikim, or righteous, who observed only the letter of the law of Moses, and cared little for its spirit, and who were afterwards known as Sadducees, comprised most of the nobles and more wealthy citizens, and very many of them were ready to obey the decrees of Antiochus, if by so doing they might save their wealth and social position.

The new general of the insurgents, Judas, unfurled the banner on which was inscribed the name by which he and his brethren were afterwards known, that of the Maccabees, a word whose derivation is uncertain; but under the circumstances, the explanation which refers it to the first letters of a sentence in Exodus xv. 11, "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?" seems the most probable one. Judas possessed his father's wise discretion, and mingled with it an almost superhuman daring. Having

tried his soldiers by many gallant adventures, surprising a number of cities, which he garrisoned and fortified, he determined to meet the enemy in the Apollonius, his old enemy, now governor of Samaria, first advanced against him, and was totally defeated and slain; Seron, another of the generals of Antiochus, attempted to avenge the defeat of Apollonius, but was met by Judas, in the strong pass of Bethhoron (where, many centuries before, Joshua had defeated the Canaanite kings), and he, too, was destroyed. Antiochus was furious; the insurgents were threatening the recapture of Jerusalem, and Philip, the brutal governor of that city, was clamoring for help. But the provinces of Armenia and Persia had revolted, and Antiochus must hasten to subjugate them. He, however, divided his army, sending Nicanor and Ptolemy Macron, with 67,000 troops, into Palestine, accompanied by a large number of slave-merchants, who proposed to purchase their Jewish captives. To meet this formidable force, Judas had but 6,000 men, whom he assembled at Mizpeh. There they fasted and prayed, and offered sacrifices to their covenant-keeping God. Then with a sublime audacity, which showed how fully he appreciated the power of great moral motives, and the glory of a great example, Judas issued his proclamation in the very words of the law, commanding that all who had married wives, built houses, or planted vineyards, or were fearful, should return to their homes.

His force dwindled to 3,000 ill-armed men; but they were strong in their almost fanatical zeal for the law, and every one of them would fight for their leader to the death. Learning that Gorgias, one of the Syrian generals, had been detached, with 5,000 picked soldiers and 1,000 cavalry. to surprise him by night, Judas formed the daring resolution to elude his attack, by falling on the main camp of the enemy, with his 3,000 heroes. It was morning before he arrived, but animating his men for the onset, they charged, shouting, and with all their trumpets clanging, upon the Syrians, who fled after a feeble resistance, and were pursued into the waterless plains of southern Judæa. Three thousand Syrians fell that day in battle; but Judas was as wary as bold, and having scattered the foe thoroughly, he recalled his men, and by his strict discipline kept them from plundering the Syrian camp, until Gorgias should return from his attempt to surprise them. Then his soldiers, flushed with victory, fell upon the wearied Syrian soldiers, who were dispirited at finding their camp in the hands of the Jews, and after a brief conflict routed them also, and drove them across the Jordan. The Jews then gathered a rich spoil, and distributed a

liberal share to the wounded, the widows and orphans; and seizing the slavemerchants who had come to purchase Jewish captives, they sold them into slavery. The remnant of the Syrian army and those who had not yet been in battle had rallied on the other side of the Jordan, but Judas crossed, attacked and defeated them, killing two of their generals, and compelling Nicanor to escape to Antioch, disguised as a slave. The next year, Lysias, the Syrian general, returned to the attack in southern Judæa, with a force of 65,000, a large part of them Idumæans. Judas met him with 10,000 of his invincible troops and defeated him, leaving 5,000 Syrians dead on the field of battle. He now took possession of Jerusalem, though the Syrians still held the citadel. He re-established the temple worship, replaced, from the booty he had won, the vessels of the temple, and held a feast of dedication of eight days. The succeeding year he drove out the predatory bands of Syrians, Idumæans and Ammonites who ravaged Galilee, and fell upon the Jewish towns east of the Jordan. He was successful wherever he commanded in person, or intrusted the command to his brothers; but some of his lieutenants were less wary and suffered defeats. But he had substantially delivered his country.

In the year 164 B. C. Antiochus Epiphanes died. He had been a monster of iniquity in his life, and his end was miserable, as Daniel had predicted three hundred years before. Repulsed in his attempt to plunder a rich temple in Persia, he received intelligence, while smarting under this defeat, of the disastrous state of his affairs in Palestine, and immediately hastened to return, but was seized with an incurable and loathsome disease, in a small town in the mountains of Paretacene. There, consumed in body by a fast-spreading ulcer, racked with the most horrible pain, and afflicted in mind by ghastly apparitions and the tortures of remorse, now blaspheming, and anon promising to the Jews, and to their temple, the most magnificent gifts and privileges, if only their God would deliver him from his torments, he died, unwept and unhonored by even the poorest of his subjects.

The troubles which ensued in regard to the Syrian succession, which was claimed by Antiochus V. Eupator, and Demetrius I. Soter, son of Seleucus IV., did not bring peace to Judæa. Lysias, who supported Antiochus, marched with a force of 100,000 foot, 20,000 horse and 32 elephants against Jerusalem, and having reduced Bethsura, after a long siege, in which the Maccabees performed prodigies of valor, and Eleazar, one of the brothers, was slain (crushed to death by the fall of an elephant which he had killed), the Syrian army laid siege to Jerusalem; but it was not captured, as Lysias

was compelled to return to Autioch, and Antiochus made a hollow peace with His rival, Demetrius, however, came in 162 B. C. to Autioch, seized and put to death Antiochus and Lysias, and finding that Onias IV., the last of the high-priests of the family of Josedech, had forfeited his position, by becoming the high-priest of a temple, which the Jews in Egypt had built near Heliopolis, he assumed the right to appoint a new high-priest, Eliakim or Joachim, who assumed the Greek name of Alcimus. Agronic descent, but was a base, bloody man, and commenced his career by murdering sixty of the most devout priests in one day. Again Judas rallied the patriots against this false high-priest, and when Nicanor, the old enemy of the Jews, was sent from Antioch to support Alcimus, Judas defeated him in two battles—the second at Adasa in February, 161 B. C., the most glorious of the Maccabæan victories, in which Nicanor was slain, and the independence of Judæa substantially achieved. At this time Judas sent two of his nephews to Rome to make an alliance with that power; but before their return, his noble and patriotic career was closed. Demetrius, determined to maintain the cruel and ruffianly Alcimus as high-priest, sent a large force into Judæa to accomplish that result. The negotiation of a treaty with Rome had offended some of the more rigid of the followers of Judas, while others were dissatisfied at his stern discipline, and sighed for a rule which should give them greater license. As a consequence, he had but 3,000 men to oppose the 22,000 sent against him, and these by desertions dwindled to 800; but the hero knew no fear, and when urged to fly and seek a better opportunity to defend his country, replied: "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren and not stain our honor." He fought with the old lion-like courage, and defeated the right wing of the Syrians, their choicest troops, and drove them to Azotus; but the Syrian left wing was not resisted, and fell upon the rear of the victorious Jews, and in the disaster Judas was slain. His brothers, Jonathan and Simon, recovered his body and buried it with honor in his father's sepulchre at Modin. As a patriot, a statesman, a hero, and a devout and consistent servant of God, there is no name in history which deserves to stand higher than that of Judas Maccabæus.

But though their leader was slain, the Maccabees were not disheartened. There yet remained, of the sons of Mattathias, Jonathan, the youngest son, John (who was soon after treacherously killed by the Arabs), the eldest, and Simon. Of these Jonathan, who possessed much the same qualities as Judas, was chosen the leader, and Simon assisted him by his counsel.

After several battles, Bacchides, the Syrian general, returned to Antioch, his protegé, Alcimus, having died at Jerusalem, in great torment. For two years there was quiet, and in a final battle Bacchides was defeated, and made peace with Jonathan, giving up all his prisoners, and promising not again to molest the Jews. For six years Jonathan governed the nation. making Michmash his capital, as Jerusalem was yet in the hands of the Syrians. In 153 B. C. Alexander Balas, a pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes, laid claim to the Syrian throne, and was supported by Rome. Both he and Demetrius, the reigning monarch, made lavish promises to the Jews, whose assistance they sought. The forces of Demetrius were withdrawn from Judæa, Jerusalem surrendered to Jonathan, territory offered for annexation, and the whole guaranteed to Jonathan and his heirs, if he would assist the Syrian king. Alexander Balas, on his side, offered the high-priesthood to Jonathan, and guaranteed the nation many privileges. Jonathan preferred Alexander to Demetrius, and rendered him aid. Three years later Demetrius was defeated and killed by Alexander, and in 146 B. C. Alexander's turn came. He was defeated and slain by Demetrius II. Nicator. With that king Jonathan maintained friendly relations, and secured from him the evacuation of the tower at Jerusalem, which had been so long occupied by a Syrian garrison. His wise policy enabled him also to secure the favor of the usurper Tryphon, though eventually that treacherous knave enticed him to Ptolemais, made him prisoner, and finally put him to death. Simon, the last of the brothers, succeeded Jonathan in 143 B. C. His administration was generally peaceful and prosperous, but in 136 B. C. Antiochus VII., from motives of greed, sent a large force to harass the Jews. The sons of Simon, Judas and John, attacked Cendebeus, the general of Antiochus, and completely routed and defeated him. But, in the providence of God, all the sons of Mattathias, brave and good as they were, met with a violent death. Simon and his sons Judas and Mattathias were treacherously slain at Jericho by Ptolemy, Simon's son-inlaw, in 135 B. C. John Hyrcanus, the second son of Simon, succeeded his father in the priesthood and the government, which he held for thirty years. The first seven years of his rule were disastrous. His attempt to punish. the murderer of his father was unsuccessful, and Antiochus so far prevailed against him as to compel him to dismantle the fortifications of Jerusalem and return to a tributary condition. In 128 B. C. the death of Antiochus and the waning power of Syria gave John Hyrcanus the opportunity for recovering the independence of Judea, of which he promptly availed himself. Having become independent, he determined upon the subjugation of his former foes. He reduced and laid waste two considerable cities east of the Jordan, and then turning his arms against the Idumæans, he completely destroyed their cities, compelled the people to receive circumcision, and adopt the Jewish religion, and completely wiped out the Idumæan kingdom from history. He next visited Samaria, took Sichem (the modern Sychar or Nablous), and destroyed and razed to the ground the hated Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. At a later period (109 B. C.) his sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, conquered the city of Samaria, ploughed its site, and converted it into pools of water. He also brought under his sway most of Galilee, and renewed the alliance with Rome. He erected the Tower of Baris, afterward the Castle Antonia of Herod, at the northwest corner of the temple enclosure.

But if there was no outward disturbance of the peace in Judæa in the latter part of the reign of John Hyrcanus, there was a rupture of the religious unity of the nation, which brought manifold disasters upon it in the next generation. The Maccabees had been, alike from principle and policy, closely united with the Chasidim or Pharisees, the religious zealots of that time, who, not content with obedience to the mere letter of the Mosaic law, contended for the observance also of the traditional or oral law, and were austere in their requirement of all the minutiæ of ccremonies, which ages of tradition had attached to it. They differed widely in these matters from the Zadikim, Tsedukim, or Sadducees, whose whole religion consisted in an observance of the letter of the Mosaic law, and who formed the courtly or noble party. They were indifferentists both in religion and policy. The Charidim had been the brave and devoted soldiers of Judas Maccabeus, and while they attached undue importance to matters of trivial observance, they were patriotic, earnest, and generally God-fearing men. An affront from one of these men to John Hyrcanus, near the close of his administration, led that able and generally wise prince to abandon them and throw himself completely into the hands of the Sadducees, and from that time the fortunes of his house and of the nation began to wane.

Aristobulus I., the son of John Hyrcanus, the first of the Asmonæan prince-priests who assumed the title of king, reigned but one year—a year fruitful in crimes: he starved his mother to death, imprisoned three of his brothers, and through his jealousy caused the assassination of his favorite brother, Antigonus. He subdued Ituræa, and while dangerously ill his death was hastened by remorse.

He was succeeded by his eldest surviving brother, Alexander Jannsons, who reigned twenty-seven years, 105-78 B. C., but signalized his succession to the throne by putting his next brother to death. These twenty-seven years were marked by wars without and commotions within the kingdom. He was hated and despised by the Pharisees, and on one occasion revenged himself for their insults, by slaughtering 6,000 of them in the court of the temple. Not long after, when he had been defeated in one of his schemes of conquest, the whole nation rose against him, and there was civil war for six years. He was compelled to fly to the mountains, but, by a reaction in the public feeling, he regained his power, and brought his prisoners in triumph to Jerusalem. "Then was seen the incredible spectacle of a highpriest, the grandson of Simon the Maccabee, sitting at a banquet, with his wives and concubines, to gloat his eyes upon the crucifixion of eight hundred of his enemies, and the massacre of their wives and children." The remainder of his reign was undisturbed by open revolt. On his dying bed, he advised his wife, to whom he left the civil government, to become reconciled to the Pharisees. Alexandra ruled from 78 to 69 B. C., and though she ostensibly complied with his advice, she secretly aided her younger son, Aristobulus, in thwarting it. Her elder son, Hyrcanus II., was the high-priest, and, after his mother's death, the nominal king; but he was a weak, indolent prince, and relinquished for six years both offices to his more ambitious brother, Aristobulus II. Meantime a new power was coming to the succession in the person of Antipater, an Idumæan noble, but professedly a Jew, and the bosom friend of Hyrcanus, whom he used as his tool to gain for himself and his sons the supreme power over Palestine. He plotted the overthrow of Aristobulus, and after intrigues with Aretas, king of the Nabatheans, and conciliation of Pompey, the Roman triumvir, he succeeded in effecting his deposition. Hyrcanus II. was made princepriest of Judæa, but was forbidden to assume the crown. Pompey visited and entered the Most Holy Place of the Temple, but did not plunder it. Antipater was the real monarch, and through the conflicts of Pompey, Mark Antony, Crassus and Cæsar, he managed to be always on the popular More than once was the temple besieged, and more than once was it plundered; but while Aristobulus and one of his sons were murdered, and Hyrcanus kept in an honorable durance, Antipater was made, in 48 B. C., procurator of Judæa and a Roman citizen. Soon after he made his elder son, Phasael, governor of Jerusalem, and his younger son, Herod, then not more than twenty-five years of age, governor of Galilee. Hyrcanus, too

feeble to resist these encroachments, submitted, and Antipater ruled. The death of Julius Cæsar, 44 B. C., was a great misfortune for Judæa. His successor, Cassius, was one of the most rapacious of the Roman prætors. He demanded an enormous annual tribute from Judæa, which, from previous famines, was collected with great difficulty, the entire population of some towns being sold as slaves to raise the amount. Malichus, the leader of the Pharisees, had pledged himself for one-half of the tribute, but was unable to obtain the money, and would have been put to death by Cassius, if Antipater had not persuaded Hyrcanus to supply the deficiency. Malichus was one of the most bigoted and fanatical of the Pharisees, all of whom hated Antipater, and he repaid the kindness of the Idumæan by taking his life by poison. This was in 43 B. C. Herod and Phasael succeeded to their father's power, Herod gradually assuming the greater part, from his dexterity in managing the successive Roman leaders. Herod procured an order from Cassius for the death of Malichus, whom he caused to be slain in the presence of Hyrcanus. After the battle of Philippi, though Herod secured the favor of Mark Antony, the Pharisees revolted, and Hyrcanus placed himself at their head. But Herod was equal to the occasion. won the feeble prince-priest back by offering to marry his granddaughter, who was also the granddaughter of Aristobulus on her father's side. this alliance Herod connected himself with the Asmonæan family. Antony made Herod and Phasael tetrarchs of Palestine, and conferred many favors on Hyrcanus and the nation.

But the next year (40 B. C.) came a new disaster. Syria had revolted from Antony's rule and called in the aid of the Parthians. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II., and nephew of Hyrcanus, had been for several years attempting to regain the throne of Judæa, which his father had lost, and at last, in desperation, he sought the aid of the Parthian general, offering him an enormous bribe to reinstate him. The Parthian accepted, and Antigonus marched upon Jerusalem, where the two factions, Pharisees and Sadducees, came to open war. Herod controlled them for a time by great severity, but at length Phasael and Hyrcanus were induced, against Herod's advice, to submit their cause in person to the Parthian general. Herod fled to Masada, and placed his mother, his sister, and his betrothed bride, Mariamne, under the protection of his brother Joseph and an Idumæan force, and himself departed for Rome. Meanwhile, the Parthian general, finding that Herod, whom alone he cared to secure, had escaped, threw both Phasael and Hyrcanus into prison, cutting off the latter's ears and thus disqualifying

him for the priesthood. Phasael committed suicide in prison. Meantime Herod, at Rome, had artfully advocated the claims of Aristobulus, his brother-in-law and grandson of Hyrcanus, but had been himself appointed by the Roman senate king of Judæa. He returned at once, and though Antigonus maintained a nominal sovereignty for three years, Herod, with the aid of the Romans, constantly gained on him, and at length, in 37 B. C., captured Jerusalem, took Antigonus prisoner and sent him in chains to Antony, who put him to death at Herod's instigation, and in 37 B. C. Herod was undisputed king of Judæa. Herod's reign continued until 4 B. C., according to the common reckoning; but our Lord was born in Bethlehem four years before the commonly received era, and Herod died a few months after his birth.

In his vigorous administration, his earnest efforts to promote the prosperity of his kingdom, his beneficence in times of famine and distress, his careful protection of all forms of industry, his reduction of the taxes, and his lavish expenditure in rebuilding the temple and rearing anew the ruined cities of Palestine, Herod perhaps deserved the title of "the Great," which has been bestowed upon him; but with all these good qualities he was a tyrant and despot, envious, cruel, lustful and blood-thirsty. He put to death the venerable Hyrcanus, his best-beloved wife, the beautiful and inuocent Mariamne, and her mother, his three favorite sous, his own brother, the brother of his wife, the young Aristobulus, and many thousands of his people, including a part of the Sanhedrim, or Grand Council of the Among his latest acts of cruelty was the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, in the hope of thereby destroying the infant Messiah. had planned, at the very day of his death, other and more extended massicres, from the execution of which he was only prevented by the hand of the death-angel. His sons and descendants who succeeded to portions of his sway, though more completely vassals of Rome than he had ever been, inherited most of his vices of lust, cruelty and love of display, without a tithe of his ability. Several of them died in exile and disgrace; among others, Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist. Herod Agrippa I. (the Herod of Acts xii. 20), like his grandfather, Herod the Great. perished from a most loathsome disease. His son, Herod Agrippa II., the best of the family, the King Agrippa of Acts xxv. and xxvi., survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and died in Rome, A. D. 100.

With the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, the Jewish nation, as such, came to an end. Their mission, as the chosen people of God, from whom,

according to the flesh, Christ, our Redeemer, came; to whom were consigned the oracles of God, to whom were sent prophets, apostles and seers, to declare to them the will, the promises, and the threatenings of the Almighty, was completed. The Christ, the Anointed Oue, had come, and they, who for ages had been taught to look for his appearing, had not received him. Always a stiff-necked, rebellious, and disobedient people they had added to their other sins that they crucified the Lord of Glory, and henceforward they were to be scattered among all nations, till the fulness of the Gentiles was brought in.



## PALESTINE, OR THE HOLY LAND:

Its Geography, Climate, Productions, Topography and History.

HE Holy Land! How expressive the title, and how true! Holy, because it was set apart by a holy God, as the home of his chosen people; because, throughout the ages, holy men, patriarchs and seers, prophets and sweet singers, apostles and evangelists, have proclaimed on its hill-tops, and in its valleys and plains the visions and revelations of the divine will; but holiest of all, because, in its temple, Jehovah was worshipped; and for thirty-three years, in its cities and villages, the Son of God, in human flesh arrayed, lived, taught,

preached, and practised the will of God, and after performing many miracles, suffered and died in its chief city, the shameful death of the cross, rose again, and ascended to heaven, not as a martyr, not as a teacher, but as the one atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Other lands, and, indeed, some portions of our own land, may have fairer skies, a more equable climate, loftier forests, birds of sweeter song or more exquisite plumage, flowers of more resplendent beauty, fruits of more luscious taste, spices of richer fragrance, or grains containing greater nutriment; the scenery of mountain, valley, and plain, the landscape of river, lake, and waterfall, may be more lovely in other lands, than in this; there may be more of awful grandeur and sublimity in the Himalayas, the Andes, the Rocky mountains, or even in the Alps, the Carpathians, the terrible gorges of the Caucasus, or the wondrously varied summits and ravines of the Tuolumne and the Yellowstone; but, in one respect, the Holy Land has no rival, no peer. There, and there only, the Son of God came down to earth, and lived, walked, and conversed with men. The prints of his feet, the paths he trod, the mountains he climbed for intercourse with heaven, the hill-sides where he preached to the multitudes, and from which he

miraculously fed them, the higher slopes where he was transfigured, and from whence he ascended to heaven, the very places where he sat, and the objects on which he looked, have consecrated that land, and made it more precious than any other on which the sun ever shone.

Where was this Holy Land? What were its boundaries, its relations to other lands and countries? and what were its special characteristics of climate, soil, vegetation, and animal life? "In the centre of the world," say the Jews; "in the centre, or very near the centre of the three great continents of the old world," say the ablest of modern geographers, with the vast mass of the Asiatic continent stretching far away, northeastward, eastward, and southeastward from it; Africa, almost as large, at the south and southwest, while Europe and the isles of the Atlantic, and the Frozen sea, extended westward and northward, far beyond where man had ever trod. Asiatic in its location, yet European in its geographical character and affinities, and African in its earlier inhabitants, its desert surroundings, and its philosophic tendencies, it bore the impress of the three continents, to which it seemed about equally allied.

Let us draw a little nearer, and look more closely at its boundaries. However varied may have been the territorial limits assigned at different periods of its history to the name of "Palestine," now restricting it to the coast and to the land of the Philistines, and, anon, extending it across the desert to the Euphrates, there has always been a very definite limitation of the term, "The Holy Land," which has been considered as comprising the region assigned by Moses and Joshua to the twelve tribes, and held, in the most prosperous days of David and Solomon, as their own land, in distinction from the tributary nations around them.

Thus defined, we may say that the northern boundary was the river Leontes (now called the Litany), from its mouth to the point where the northern branch of that river turns sharply westward; thence east along the southern slope of Mount Hermon to about the thirty-sixth meridian of east longitude, where the wilderness and sandy desert of the northern part of Bashan, and the Hauran commence. On the east, except for a short distance, where the volcanic district of the Hauran is more fertile, a vast, sandy, arid desert stretches southward to Sinai, and the northern extremity of the Red sca, forming a part of the great Arabian desert. On the south, a similar sandy desert extends across the whole region, to the isthmus of Suez and the Mediterrancan. On the west, the Mediterranean sea is its boundary throughout its entire length. On the north, Hermon, nearly 9,000 feet in

altitude, and the frowning heights of Lebanon, render all approaches by land impossible. At the northeast, the great road from Damascus, and the more distant Nineveh and Babylon, passes across a short tract of sand, and reaches the Jordan, below the sea of Galilee. The deserts on the south and east formed an almost impassable barrier to all approach in those directions, and as yet the Mediterranean or Great sea was not vexed by the keels of ships of war. The great road from Damascus, after crossing the Jordan and the plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, reached the Mediterranean, and followed the coast plain to Egypt. This was the only practicable route for a large military force, or any great body of men.

When God chose Israel to be his peculiar people, knowing their weakness and proneness to imitate the idolatrous nations around them, he gave them this land of Palestine as their heritage, that they might be isolated, or cut off from the heathen nations, who would lead them to sin. Had they been planted on the Assyrian plain, or in the Nile valley, or placed in Greece, they would have speedily become idolaters, above and beyond all the nations around them. They would have multiplied their false gods till, like the people of India, their number exceeded that of the inhabitants of the land. As it was, they were tempted and fell into too frequent idolatries, by the Canaanite and other tribes which occupied the country, and which they failed, according to the divine command, to extirpate. But though, in the time of the judges, and too often in the period of the kings, they lapsed into the worship of Baal and Astarte, of Moloch and Amon, yet there were always a large body of sincere worshippers of the true God; and this was due in part, at least, to this isolation in their position.

But while it was the purpose of God to keep his people from entangling alliances with foreign nations, it was equally necessary that they should be brought into occasional contact with remoter tribes and peoples, that they might take a part in the great movements by which he was bringing the whole world into a state of preparation for the coming of his Son. The monarchies of Assyria, Syria, Babylon, Media, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, must, each in turn, be brought in contact with this little state, whose shores were washed by the farthest waves of the Great sea; and the peculiar people of God were to be subject to each of these nations. It was necessary that thus the knowledge of the only living and true God should be diffused through all these countries, and that they should be prepared to receive the gospel, when it should be preached unto them. The highway of the Gentiles, or "of the nations," as it should rather be called, was thus kept open,

and was constantly traversed by armies who sometimes met in fierce conflict, within the bounds of Palestine.

The greatest length of the Holy Land is about 130 miles. Its breadth varies from 70 miles in the south, to 40 miles in the north, and its entire area is about 7,150 square miles, or 650 square miles less than that of the State of Massachusetts.

The whole country is divided into four nearly parallel belts from north to south, the only break being in the plain of Esdraelon. These are, 1st. The coast plain, a narrow strip at the north, scarcely anywhere more than two miles wide, and often much less, from the mouth of the Leontes or Litary to the southern end of the Ladder of Tyre. The hills come close to the Mediterranean, at this point forming bold bluffs, and the plain, what there is of it, is mostly only drifting sand, thrown up by the sea. Below the Ladder of Tyre, this maritime plain spreads out into broad fertile fields, elevated only a few feet above the Mediterranean, and from eight to twelve miles in breadth, watered by many small streams from the hills. plain of Akka, rich and fruitful in grains, extends to the mouth of the Kishon, and the northern base of Carmel. After passing the bold headland of Carmel, which extends far out into the Mediterranean, the plain again becomes narrow and sandy, nowhere more than two miles in breadth, and even this, mostly drifting sand and dunes or sand-hillocks, which have almost entirely covered the ruins of Cæsarea. The few streams which flow from the hills form marshes and quicksands. Below Casarea, it again expands into the broad plain of Sharon, and farther south, into the still wider stretch of fertile and rolling lands, which were anciently known as the "Shephelah," or "low country," "the land of the Philistines." This is tolerably well-watered, as far south as the Wady Ghuzzeh and the Wady Seba, the ancient brook Besor, which forms the boundary of the desert at the south-southwest. It was once very fertile, but on the seacoast the sands have invaded it, and the orchards of Joppa, the fields, vineyards, and olive groves of Mejdel, Hamameh, and other villages are nearly buried in sand, and Ashdod (or Azotus) and Askelon, with their vast ruins, are completely overwhelmed; even Gaza, the strongest of these cities, three miles inland, is suffering the same fate. This region, which once sustained a vast population, is now almost uninhabited. The plain of Sharon, formerly so fruitful, now produces little else than forests of gigantic thistles, and, in early spring, wild flowers of the brightest colors; but the whole country is dotted with tells, or heaps of ruins of cities and towns, which

show how thickly it was peopled, two thousand years ago. 2d. From this coast plain, at varying distances from the sea, hills begin to rise, mostly with gentle slopes on the western side, and gashed at frequent intervals by streams which find their way from the central table-land to the sea. The hills rise to an average height of about 1,800 or 2,000 feet, and form' a table-land or plateau of undulating surface, and containing many valleys and plains, especially on its western side; from this table-land rise a considerable number of peaks and ridges to a height of from 2,500 to 4,000 feet above the sea; Little Hermon (Jebel-ed-Duhy) being the highest. Other notable peaks and ridges of this plateau are the heights of Hebron, over 3,000 feet, those of Bethlehem, 2,704 feet; the ruins of Ramah near Hebron, 2,800 feet; the Mount of Olives, 2,665; Jerusalem, the highest point, 2,585 feet; Neby Samwil (the tomb of Samuel), about 2,700; Bethel, 2,401; the ridge of Sinjil near Shiloh, 3,108; Mount Ebal, 2,700, and Mount Gerizim, 2,650; Jebel Haskin, the highest point between Ebal and Gilboa, 2,000; Mount Gilboa, 2,200; Mount Carmel, 1,800; Mount Tabor, 1,865; The Horns of Hattin (supposed to be the scene where the "Sermon on the Mount" was delivered), 1,096; Safed, 2,775. The plains or broad valleys of this central ridge are usually less elevated; the plain of Mukhna or Shechem, at the base of Mount Gerizim, is 1,595 feet above the sea; that of Sanur, 1,330 feet; the great plain of Esdraelon, which forms the principal pass across this central plateau, and gives access to the Jordan valley, is only 382 feet above the sea; Nazareth, a valley nestled in among the mountains, and having behind it a hill of considerable elevation, is 1,237 feet above the sea. The plain of El-Battauf, north of Nazareth, is considerably elevated, but was very fertile anciently. While the western slopes of this elevated table-land, for the most part, gently decline to the maritime plain below, and chariots can ascend and descend them, especially in the valleys of the streams, the eastern slopes are extremely steep and rugged, and, at most points, impassable for chariots, wagons or an armed force. Only at four points was the passage of an army from the Jordan valley to the table-land possible; and even at three of these points, a small force could effectually resist the passage of a large one. These passes were: above the confluence of the Wady Jalud with the Jordan, nearly opposite Bethshean, or Scythopolis, which communicates directly with the plain of Esdraelon; at the crossing of the Damaseus road, about ten miles below the lake of Tiberias, which though very hilly is the best of all; the ferry at Bethbarah. on the route leading to Es-Salt, the ancient Ramoth-Gilead, over which

David passed, when he was flying from Absalom; and the crossing on the Roman road at Shafir, on the route from Jerusalem, by Jericho, to Damascus. At the northern extremity of the Dead sea, and at the mouth of the Wady El-Ghur, at Engedi (now Ain Jidy), about midway of the western shore of that sea, are two other so called passes, through which the Moabites and Edomites are said to have swarmed in the days of the kingdom of Judah; but the passage seems only practicable for the ibex or chamois.

On this table-land, thus defended by nature, for more than 1,600 years the Hebrew nation dwelt, and for nearly 700 years the kings of Israel and Judah ruled. Not only were these kingdoms nearly inaccessible to foreign nations from these natural barriers, but their cities and towns were strongly fortified, and the people were desperately brave and persistent fighters, so that their repeated defeats and captivities indicate more sturdy fighting and more determined valor, than has been exhibited in any war of modern times.

3d. The valley of the Jordan and of the Dead sea next claims our atten-There is no river valley like this in the world. Rising on the northern slopes of Hermon, by several mountain torrents, it is at first above the level of the Mediterranean sea, but falling soon to the level and marshy plain of Dan (now Tell-el-Kâdy), it enters the basin of Lake Merom (now El-Hûlch) at an elevation of only twenty feet above the sea, and in the 130 miles of its subsequent course, falls more than 1,300 feet, entering the Dead sca, with its surface 1,292 feet below that of the Mediterranean sca. the Dead sea nor the river Jordan are navigable to any extent, the former from its peculiar character, the latter from its extreme crookedness and its numberless cataracts. From its deep depression, and its sources and affluents in the mountains, the river is liable to sudden and extraordinary floods, which often drive the wild beasts, which abound in the rugged and cavernous sides of its banks, from their lairs, and make them dangerous to the inhabitants of the high-lands. Its atmosphere and climate are extremely hot and enervating. This is due, both to the depth of the river valley, and its inaccessibility to healthful breezes; but its soil is one of the most fertile in the world, and its productions are wholly of a tropical character. The palms, balsams, spices, roses, indigo, sugar, and other tropical products of Jericho and the Jordan valley, have been famous for ages. The cultivators of this rich soil have usually been the hardy peasants from the hill-country, the inhabitants of the valley being a feeble and effete race, as vicious and depraved as their predecessors of Sodom and Gomorrah.



4th. The table-land east of the Jordan differs materially from that on the west. Its western declivity is steep and precipitous, except at a few points, but the general elevation is about 2,500 feet above the sea, and is nearly all an undulating plain, furnishing rich and abundant pasturage for herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep and goats, and capable of sustaining, as it has in times past sustained, an immense population. Its northern section is well adapted to the culture of grain, and is to this day the granary of Damascus. In the northeast there is a large tract formerly called Argob, now known as El-Lejah, which seems to have been, ages ago, the scene of volcanic convulsions. It is one of the most forbidding and savage regions on the earth's surface. Both Bashan and the Hauran have very rich and deep soils, and extensive forests. Water is not plentiful, but the lands do not require irrigation.

Owing to this great diversity of altitude, to the exposure on the one side to the sea, and on the other to the hot and steaming exhalations from the Jordan valley, the climate of Palestine exhibits a greater variety than can be found elsewhere in any territory of ten times its size. The snow lies upon the head of Hermon, till late in the summer, and frequently throughout the whole summer. In both the plateaus, east and west of the Jordan, there is snow usually for three or four days in each winter. On the maritime plain, it is not in summer, as the latitude (31° 5′ to 33° 30′) requires, but the heat is somewhat modified by the sea breezes. The Jordan valley is one of the hottest places on earth, and the heat is not moderated by any The hill country, as the plateaus are called, is perhaps as healthy a climate as can be found anywhere. It certainly was so, two thousand or three thousand years ago. When its forests were standing, its hills terraced, its lands irrigated, and its waters pure, and its people were leading an essentially outdoor life, the rapid and enormous increase of the population was a sufficient evidence of the healthfulness of the climate. The tribe of Benjamin, in about the year of the world 3,000, was reduced to six hundred men and their wives; two hundred and fifty years later, the same tribe could bring into the field four hundred thousand fighting men, indicating a population of more than two millions; and this without any expansion of territory, and after many desolating wars.

The productions, vegetable and animal, of this little country were as remarkably diversified as its climate. In the north the cedar, the oak of several species, the terebinth, pine, maple, ash, juniper, dwarf-elder, sumac, and hawthorn flourish, and, generally, the plants and shrubs of central

Europe and our own northern States; the arbutus, hawthorn, holly oak, pistachio, the "Christ's thorn," and the carob or locust tree are found in considerable numbers, in the central and southern portions of the table-land, and with them, as cultivated trees, the olive, grape, apple, peach, pomegranate, apricot, walnut, almond, quince, mulberry, fig, sycamore and oleander. The willow is found on the banks of streams, as are also brakes or gigantic reeds. On the maritime plains are found the olive, apple, peach, orange, lemon, citron, banana, prickly pear, and date palm. In the Jordan valley and along the Dead sea are seen the nubk, a spinous thorn tree, the papyrus, tamarisk, acacia, sea pink, Dead sea apple, styrax, and bay tree; and of cultivated trees, shrubs and vines, the palm, sugar cane, banana, indigo, melons, gourds, and cucumbers of immense size. Tobacco, hemp, cotton, flax and silk are produced in large quantities; the last becoming, of

late years, a staple product. All the grains and esculent vegetables of temperate and of hot climates are produced abundantly. The cultivation of the olive for its oil is still, as it has always been, one of the chief industries; and the culture of the grape, both for fruit and raisins and for wine, is nearly as great as in olden times. The wild flowers and shrubs of Palestine are very numerous. Of its 2,500 species of flowers, 500 are said to be common to it and to Great Britain. Aromatic shrubs and plants



LION.

are abundant on the hills, and the great plains, like Sharon, Esdraelon and El-Battauf, are covered with gigantic thistles, and, in their season, with brilliant flowers.

While the wild animals of Palestine are not very numerous, they belong to very diverse and widely scattered families. The Asiatic lion is rare, though occasionally found in the Jordan thickets; the panther is more common there, and also in the hills of Judæa and Samaria; the Syrian bear is found in upper Galilee; wolves, hyenas, jackals and foxes abound; the wild boar is seen in large numbers in the marshes of the Jordan and in the thickets of Bashan and Gilead; badgers in the vicinity of Hebron; the ibex or wild goat in the wilderness of Judæa; gazelles and fallow deer on

the plains; a great variety of rodents, some of them belonging to distant families, as the jerboa or jumping rat, which much resembles the kangaroo rat of Australia; the hyrax, translated coney in our Bibles, but which is the smallest of the thick-skinned animals, found only in Palestine, Abyssinia and South Africa, and is a kind of rhinoceros in miniature; hares, squirrels, moles, bats, mice, porcupines and hedgehogs. Of domestic animals there are the horse; the ass, often white and of great beauty and docility; the mule; the camel; the ox, tall, long-horned, but generally lean; the buffalo, partially domesticated; large-tailed and other sheep, the long-eared Syrian



OLTURE. (Isaiah xxxiv. 15.)

goat, and the dog and cat. The dogs of the shepherds are of an excellent breed and very intelligent, but the rest of the dogs and the cats, like those of Constantinople, have no owners, and are half-starved, wild and worthless.

There are a great variety of reptiles: serpents, both venomous and harmless; lizards of many species, scorpions, chameleons, frogs, toads, tortoises, turtles and terrapins. The crocodile inhabits one of the streams that cross the plain of Sharon—the Nahr Zurka. Birds of prey, and all the varieties of song birds and game birds to be found in Europe and western Asia, are found here in great numbers. The stork, the white ibis, the heron, the pelican, and many species of eagles, vultures,

hawks and owls, are among the birds of the country. The Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee both abound in fish, and furnish palatable food to a large part of the inhabitants. Insects, especially the destructive and annoying kinds, are found in such numbers as to be almost a plague. The fly, mosquito, bee, wasp, and hornet, horse-fly, ants, spiders, grasshoppers, beetles, glow-worms, and numberless species of butterflies abound; but the most formidable and destructive of all the insect tribes there is the

Tocust, which is never absent, though it is only rarely that they come in such numbers as to produce a famine.

Considerable portions of the Holy Land give evidence of volcanic action, and earthquakes of great severity have many times visited it. On both kides of the Jordan there must have been active volcanoes, long ages ago, and their extinct craters still exist. The whole Jordan valley is an immense rent or fissure in the elevated rocky plain, which once extended across from the Mediterranean to the Arabian desert. This gigantic cleft is about a hundred and fifty miles in length, from north to south, and, in its lower portion at the Dead sea, four thousand feet deep. Along the whole valley, the hot mineral springs, the trap rock, and the masses of lava, show its volcanic character. The underlying rock throughout Palestine, except where volcanic action has changed it, is limestone, sometimes changing to chalk, colite or dolomite; and in the vicinity of the Dead sea bituminous limestones and shales. Farther east, in the land of Edom, there are red sandstones. The superficial deposits of the Jordan valley are alluvial, with some chalky layers washed down from the upper valley, and accompanied by decomposed vegetable matter, rendering it exceedingly fertile. Nearly all the underlying limestone is cavernous. In the south, the wilderness of Judæa, and, indeed, almost the whole kingdom of Judah, abounds in caverns, often of large extent, in some of which considerable armies have been sheltered. Some of these caverns were used as dwellings or stables. birth-place of our Lord is supposed to have been in one of these caves. We have been thus particular in our description of the physical geography, productions, animals, etc., of Palestine, because of their bearing on the composition and history of the Bible. All the other, so called, sacred books of different nations and religions have been local in their character; written by one or more persons, in a country and climate which had many local peculiarities, they were unfitted for other lands, peopled by differing nations, living under other skies, and accustomed to a different temperature, to different forests, fruits, grains, flowers, and shrubs, and to a different class of animals. Koran, written in and for Arabia, loses most of its interest and intelligibility, when offered to nations living in a colder and moister, or a more western climate, than that of Arabia. The oriental imagery, drawn from the fervid character of the eastern clime, is tame and meaningless, in a country like western Europe. The same is true of the sacred books of India and China. But the Bible, though mostly written in Palestine, is a book for all lands, for all climates, and all times. Its prophets, poets, and historians,

reared under the shadow of Hermon, could speak feelingly of the snow and vapors; the stormy wind fulfilling His word; "they had seen the snow like wool, the hoar frosts scattered like ashes, and the ice like morsels," and shivering in the severity of a winter in the hills of northern Galilee, they were prompted to exclaim, "Who can stand before His cold?" or amid the burning heats of a sandy and parched Negeb, or south country, they have longed for "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and have celebrated His goodness, who "turneth the wilderness into a standing water. and dry ground into water springs." In the hot and dank Jordan valley, they could cry out, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord;" and when its floods carried destruction to all those who were within their reach, they saw in the flood, the manifestation of the power of that God, who had divided Jordan, that his people might pass over. natural scenery, the caverns, the climate, the fruits, crops, pasturage, forests. shrubs and flowers, and the animals and insects of Palestine, furnish thousands of themes of illustration to the sacred writers; and because these were so diversified, that they were adapted to the people of all lands, and each could find in them something which had commended itself to their experience or observation, the Bible has been a favorite book in all lands, and readily understood by the people of all countries.

And while the Jew was isolated from other nations, and proud of his isolation, he was yet brought into contact and communication, in spite of himself, with all the nations adjacent, as their armies passed along the coast-plains, crossed the great plain of Esdraelon, often fighting fierce battles at Megiddo, forded the Jordan, and made their way to and from Damascus, or Nineveh, or Babylon. This was the great thoroughfare of all the most powerful nations of antiquity, and the Jewish prophets had abundant opportunities of studying their characteristics, and of learning their history. The wonderful minuteness of the descriptions of the judgments that were to fall on these nations, has often attracted the attention of scholars, and without lessening in the least our reverence for the inspired character of these prophecies, we may well attribute many of these details to their frequent and thorough observation of them, and their customs and traits of character.

In these acts of his providence, God displayed his wisdom and power, in that, while devoting so large a portion of his word to the Hebrew nation, its history, wanderings, sins, repentances, and captivities, he still made it a book for all times, all circumstances, all countries, and all peoples.



HISTORY.—This may properly be divided into six distinct periods, four of which belong to Biblical times. 1. The Patriarchal period, extending from the earliest ages to its conquest by the Israelites under Joshua. Palestine was settled by Canaan, the fourth son of Ham and grandson of Noah, and his eleven sons. Some of the descendants of Mizraim, an elder brother of Canaan, whose principal seat was in Egypt, settled in the southern part of Palestine-among them the Philistines, the Anakim, and perhaps the Zamzummim. The country was called the land of Canaan. but the Canaanite settlements extended through a large part of Syria and far up into the Lebanon mountains. This migration to Palestine seems to have taken place during the lifetime of Canaan, and so, perhaps, within two hundred years after the flood. Eventually the descendants of Canaan became very numerous there, and were divided into ten or twelve tribes. each of which took a name derived from those of his sons or grandsons. The Zidonians, who occupied what was afterward known as Phœnicia. were the descendants of Sidon, the eldest son, the Hittites of Heth, and so In the days of Abraham, the Canaanites were, in central Palestine, altogether agricultural in their habits, and very few in numbers; the vast flocks and herds of Abraham and Isaac were not restricted in their pasturage, and except the Philistines (who were descendants of Mizraim), and a few Hittites in the southwest, and the Amorite inhabitants of the cities of the plain in the southeast, the land had but a very scanty popula-In Isaac's time, Esau intermarried with the daughters of Heth, and in Jacob's later life there was a Hivite town at Shechem, of no great size, since two of his sons, with their servants, destroyed all its inhabitants. At a later period, during the bondage of Israel in Egypt, several of these Canaanite tribes became both numerous and powerful, the Amorites in the southeast being perhaps the strongest, and next to these the Hittites, Jebusites, Hivites, Perizzites and Girgashites, who occupied most of western Palestine. The Philistines were a powerful tribe in the southwest, and the Zidonians had already commenced their career as a great maritime power. Aside from these there were in western Palestine a few families of a gigantic race, who seem to have preceded the Canaanites in their possession of the land. They were called by different names, as Anakim, Avim, Rephaim, Emim and Zuzim. The last three occupied the plateau east of the Jordan, and Og, king of Bashan, and the builders of those giant cities in Bashan and the Hauran were of these races; so were Goliath and the other giant warriors of the Philistines of a later date. Of the origin

of this gigantic race we know nothing. They had attained to a somewhat higher civilization than the Canaanite tribes, but in morals both races were sadly deprayed. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, these tribes were broken up into small districts, usually containing a fortified town and its suburbs, each with its petty chief, and all in some sort independent, though they occasionally united in groups to resist a common foe. The Philistines, who were, like the Hanse towns in Germany in the Middle Ages, a confederation of free cities, and the Zidonians, were more highly civilized, and had a more efficient government. With the exception of these two nations, and the Gibeonites, who escaped by false representations, and a few Jebusites, who retained their stronghold at Jerusalem, the whole Hamitic race in the Holy Land, were wiped out in the time of Joshua and the Judges. Zidon never troubled Israel seriously; the Philistines alone, of the descendants of Ham, remained as their persistent enemies. The other tribes and nations around Palestine, which gave them so much trouble and with whom they waged so many wars, were, with the possible exception of the Amalekites, like themselves, descendants of Shem; thus Midian was a son of Abraham by his wife or concubine Keturah; Ammon and Moab, children of Lot; the Arabians, descendants of Ishmael, and the Edomites of Esau. Even Syria, which had been settled at an early period by sons of Canaan, had received so large an infusion of Shemitic blood, that its inhabitants were entitled to be regarded as descendants of Shem. Though the country had been promised to the seed or descendants of Abraham by Jehovah, yet it did not come into their possession, except two or three places of burial, until the time of Joshua, about 466 years later.

At the time of its conquest by the Israelites, the population could not have been very dense, and there were few large towns. Those of the greatest note were: Gerar, in the southwest, apparently the capital of the Hittites, and Beersheba, belonging to the same tribe, the southernmost town in Palestine; Kirjath-Arba, afterward Hebron, in the same region; Libnah, Makkedah, Lachish, Eglon, and Adullam, Hittite cities captured by Joshua; Ephrath, afterwards Bethlehem, never a large town, but one of special note in all periods of the history of Palestine; Salem or Jerusalem; Luz or Bethel, consecrated by Jacob's dream, though then not even a village; Jericho, the principal city of the plain or circle of Jordan, and tainted with all the vices of the cities of that plain; Gilgal, the head-quarters of Joshua after the destruction of Jericho; Ai, near Bethel, conquered by Joshua, after a severe struggle; Timnath, a Philistine city, and

Gath, Askelon, Ekron, and Ashdod, also Philistine cities and fortresses; Shechem, the modern Nablous, near which was Jacob's well; Megiddo, Taanach and Endor, in or near the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon; Debir, another of the fortified towns of central Palestine, captured by Joshua; Succoth and Peniel, both towns on the river Jabbok, east of the Jordan. There was probably a considerable population in the vicinity of the Sea of Chinneroth, afterward better known as the Sea of Galilee, or Lake Gennesaret; but there are no data for locating the towns. The rock Etam, Eshcol, Mamre, Moriah, Dothan, Engannim, and Hadad Rimmon, seem to have been rather names of trees, rocks, fountains, etc., than names of cities.

2. The conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, a nation who had been for hundreds of years enslaved in Egypt, and, for forty years, wanderers in the terrible desert south and southeast of Palestine, a nation, numbering perhaps nearly three millions, but not of warlike training, nor of high civilization, was one of the most remarkable events in human history. The people whom they conquered were warlike, and apparently outnumbered the invaders; they occupied a country more strongly defended by nature than almost any other in the world, regarded as accessible only from the northeast-a direction from which the invaders did not come; their towns and cities were so strongly fortified as to be considered impregnable, and though broken up into petty chieftaincies, they were mostly in alliance with each other; yet within six years, thirty-one of these chiefs and nearly the whole of the Canaanite population, were swept away like chaff, and the tribes of Israel, slaves and then wanderers, had settled down in the rich pastures, and fertile lands of Gilead, Bashan, Esdraelon, and the hill country of western Palestine, a free people, ruled only by Jehovah, and pledged to his worship alone.

Two and a half tribes occupied the table-lands and fertile pastures of Palestine, east of the Jordan; nine and a half tribes had their allotted territory west of that river, stretching from the base of Hermon to the el-Negeb or south country, bordering on the wildernesses of Paran and Shur, and extending from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean. The division seems unequal, for the eastern section was both larger and richer than the western; but as in other lands and times, there was a strange preference for the more inaccessible and less valuable territory. Western Palestine was to them the Land of Promise; it had been promised to Abraham, confirmed to Isaac, and settled upon the descendants of Jacob. There were the tombe

of the fathers; there the resting-place of Rachel. On the hill of Morianan altar had been reared for the sacrifice of Isaac; under the oak at Mainre, Abraham, the friend of God, had held intercourse with Jehovah: at Luz, that wondrous ladder by which heaven held communion with earth, had been seen by Jacob in his night vision; from the heights of Hebron, Abraham and Lot had looked off upon the fertile plain of the Dead sea, and the circle of the Jordan, and had seen how rich and well watered it was; and from those same heights, a few years later. Abraham had descried a smoke overhanging the whole country, as the smoke of a furnace, and knew that there were not ten righteous men in all the cities of the plain. Farther north, at Shechem, was Jacob's well, from whose cool waters they hoped to drink; and Dothan, on the great highway from Damascus to Egypt, where Joseph was sold as a slave by his unnatural brethren, to be carried into Egypt; on the borders of the great plain of Jezreel was the fountain of Engannim, at whose sweet waters the sons of Jacob had often slaked their thirst. After the country was thus occupied by Israel, there soon grew up new points of interest, which were identified with the history, the trials, the victories, and the worship of the people. Such were Gilgal, on the brow of the hill country, the western plateau overlooking the lately captured Jericho, the principal camp of Jeshua, from whence he climbed the heights of Gibeon and Bethhoron the upper, to achieve further victories; Ai, where he met his first repulse, but eventually conquered; Gibeon, overlooking the slopes of Bethhoron the nether, and the valley of Aijalon, where, as he looked down upon the flying host of Canaanites, driven to swift destruction by the mighty hailstones, he invoked a longer day, and an apparent arrest of the laws of nature, to enablehim to complete the work of entire overthrow upon these enemies of Godand of Israel. There were also Shiloh, where the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant were set up, and the permanent worship of Jehovah was established; the twin mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, on whose opposing slopes the hosts of Israel were gathered, while in the valley of Shechem below, Joshua, by divine command, read the blessings and the curses, to which the occupants of one mountain and the other gave the sanction of their united "Amen." Turning now westward, and descending the slopes of the table-land to the maritime plain, we find the light-armed troops of Israel unable to cope successfully with the mailed warriors of the Philistines, and their chariots of iron; yet they gained, at least, a temporary possession of the important cities of Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron. Jerusalem

was not as yet the holy city, and its citadel, which was very strong, was still held by a resolute band of Jebusites. Northward again, Bethel was captured and held by Ephraim; but the towns of the rich and fertile plain of Esdraelon, Bethshean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam and Megiddo, still retained in part their Canaanitish inhabitants, though, at a later period, they were put under tribute. In these early days of the rule of the judges, or rather before the death of Joshua, one place, whose exact location is not now known, deserves mention. It was Bochim, "the place of weeping or repentance," not far from Gilgal, where the angel of the Lord rebuked the assembled hosts of Israel, for their neglect and disobedience to the commands of God in not driving out the Canaanites; and brought them, repentant and weeping, to pledge themselves anew to his service. During the time when they were ruled by the judges, though these rulers possessed but limited authority, and seldom governed the whole of the twelve tribes, often only one or two, there were occasionally battles or other incidents in their administration, which made certain places famous. Among these incidents let us recall a few. The captain of the host of Jabin, king of Hazor (one of the Canaanite kings beyond Palestine), was Sisera, who had his camp at Harosheth, on the river Kishon, at a point commanding the important pass leading from the plain of Esdraelon through the Kishon valley to the plain of Akka.\* The army under his command had grievously oppressed Zebulun, Naphtali, and the peace-loving tribe of Issachar, as well as the wealthier tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim farther south. An energetic and far-sighted woman, Deborah, ruled or judged Israel at this time, and she sent a messenger to Barak, a soldier and prince of Kedesh in Naphtali, a town northwest of the Lake of Merom, asking him to assemble ten thousand of the fighting men of Naphtali and Zebulun, and meet her at or near Mount Tabor. Their object was to draw Sisera away from his strong position, to the more open region around Tabor. They were successful in this, and delivered so terrible a blow on Sisera's troops, that they were routed and fled, being followed and destroyed by Barak. Their commander dismounted, fled northward on foot, and met his fate at the hands of a Midianite woman, Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, near Kedesh, the

<sup>\*</sup> There is a little doubt in regard to the location of Harosheth, some explorers thinking that it was near Lake Merom or El-Hulch. But Dr. Thomson, author of "The Land and the Book," gives the weight of his authority to the location on the Kishon, and so do the members of the Palestine exploring expedition.

home of Barak. The song of Deborah is one of the most graphic pictures of life in Palestine at that day which has been preserved.\*

The name of Gideon recalls that of his native place, Ophrah, in Manasseh, a site now lost, but which then marked a prominent place; while Shechem and Thebez are linked, not very reputably, with the name of his natural son, the usurper Abimelech. Penuel and Succoth, towns on the east of the Jordan, in the territory of Gad, were severely punished for churlishly refusing food and succor to Gideon's men, when pursuing the Midianite kings. The victory of Jephthah over the children of Ammon and their subjugation occurred east of the Jordan, though there is a little doubt whether the Mizpeh of Judges x. 17 was Mizpeh in Benjamin near Jerusalem, or Ramath-Mizpeh—Mizpeh of Gilead—mentioned in Judges xi. 29. Jephthah seems to have attacked the Ammonites in the rear, on Mount Gilead, and to have driven them, first southwest and then southeast, for a distance of nearly forty miles, and out of twenty of their walled towns. The subsequent conflict between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites would seem to imply that Jephthah had passed through the territory of Ephraim, on his way to fight the Ammonites; but the fight at the fords of the Jordan serves to show, that the tribes had lapsed into a condition similar to that of the Arab or Bedouin tribes at the present day, when each tribe is under the control of its own sheik or chief. The exploits of Samson are connected with his birth-place, Zorah, in that part of the territory of Dan which lay nearly due west from Jerusalem; Eshtaol, not far distant, then the chief town of Dan; Timnath, one of the cities of the Philistines, three or four miles southwest of Zorah; Ashkelon and Gaza, chief cities of the Philistines on the coast; the rock Etam, a little south of Bethlehem; Ramath-Lehi and En-Hakkore, in the south of Judah, or possibly in the northern border of Simeon, in the Negeb or South country; and the valley of Sorek, probably not far from Gaza. The other events recorded in the book of the Judges occurred in Mount Ephraim, the central portion of the table-land stretching from Bethel to Engannim; in Bethlehem-Judah, in Zorah and Eshtaol, towns of Dan, already mentioned; in Laish or Dan, in the extreme north of Palestine, among the sources of the Jordan, the place where Jonathan,



<sup>\*</sup> Meroz, mentioned in that song, and denounced with a bitter curse, was a populous town, southeast of Mount Tabor, whose inhabitants had so little patriotism that they refused to render any assistance to their brethren who were struggling, at great odds, against the enemies of Israel. The tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali alone seem to have deserved credit in this well-fought battle.

the grandson or great-grandson of Moses, became the priest of an idolatrous worship; in Mizpeh of Benjamin, already mentioned; in Gibeah and Ramah of Benjamin, in Jabesh-Gilead, east of the Jordan, in the territory of Gad, and in Shiloh, and Lebonah in Mount Ephraim. The beautiful episode of Ruth, has its location in Bethlehem-Judah, though Naomi's previous sojourn and Ruth's home, had been in Moab, east of the Dead sea. The early his tory of Samuel calls attention to Ramathaim or Ramah, in the northern portion of Mount Ephraim, just south of Engannim, to Shiloh, then the religious capital of the nation, where the tabernacle worship was maintained, and later, as connected with the disastrous battle, Ebenezer and Aphek, places a short distance northwest of Jerusalem; Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, cities of the Philistines; Bethshemesh and Kirjath-Jearim, both in the northern border of Judah, where the ark of the Lord rested, when the Philistines returned it to the Israelites. Bethshemesh and the district around it must at this time have been very populous, for an agricultural district; for the temerity of its inhabitants, in looking into the ark, was punished by a sudden pestilence or destruction, which caused the death of more than fifty thousand of its inhabitants. The ark remained at Kirjath-Jearim or Baale for twenty years; but at some time, perhaps soon after Saul became king, it was removed to Nob, a Levite village, perhaps four miles north of Jerusalem, and near Gibeah, which was Saul's royal residence, and Ramah, the home of Samuel. Here was its home until the cruel and bloody destruction of Nob, by Doeg the Edomite, at the command of Saul, in revenge for the succor given to David by the priests; it was then removed back to Kirjath-Jearim, where it remained till David had captured and partially rebuilt Jerusalem.

It is to be remembered that for more than eighty years after Samuel became the judge and seer of Israel, Jerusalem was only a Jebusite village, with a strong citadel or fortress held by the Jebusites, and that though the surrounding country was somewhat densely inhabited by Israelites, this town remained in the possession of the heathen by a sort of permanent truce; no effort being made on their part to extend their limits, nor on the part of the Israelites, to capture what, from its commanding position, was their natural capital. After Saul became the first king of Israel, and during the forty years of his reign, Gibeah, usually called Gibeah-of-Saul, to distinguish it from a Gibeah farther north, was the capital and royal residence. It was three miles nearly due north of Jerusalem. At times, Saul seems to have spent a few months in Geba and Michmash, two or three miles farther

north. David's first capital was Hebron, and Jerusalem was not captured till nine years after he became king.

Saul seems to have been rather a chief than a king, ruling, indeed, the whole nation, which at this time could hardly have exceeded some three millions in number; and the remoter tribes were not very obedient subjects. His court was not brilliant, nor was there much of royal state maintained. His army was at times pitifully small, and his most extraordinary efforts did not enable him to bring into the field a force sufficient to cope successfully with the Philistines of the Shephelah, or maritime plain. These, though inhabiting a small territory, traversed the Israelite country pretty much at will, and had, by their superior skill in the mechanic arts, reduced the Israelites to a condition of dependence on them, even for their weapons of war.

One of Saul's earliest victories was the raising the siege of Jabesh-Gilead, an important town on the east side of the Jordan, about eighteen miles south of the Sca of Galilee. It had once suffered from a raid of the western tribes of Israel, because it had not sent its quota of troops for the destruction of the Benjamites, but had recovered itself when it was besieged by the Ammonites under their king, Nahash. Finding the besieging force too strong for long resistance, they sought to obtain honorable terms of surrender, but Nahash only proposed to put out the right eyes of all the inhabitants. They appealed to Saul, and he, who had been personally attending to his herds of cattle, hewed a yoke of oxen to pieces, and sent messengers with the pieces in all directions, to say that whoever would not come forth after him should have his oxen destroyed in the same way. This summons throws light on two points: the Israelites were at this time almost entirely a pastoral people, and so slightly civilized, that they could only be moved by such an appeal to the senses, and to their fears. In five days 330,000 men had assembled at Bezek, only about a day's march from Jabesh-Gilead. These were evidently but an undisciplined rabble, very poorly provided with arms, but they were probably about as well equipped as the Ammonite At all events, they were successful in defeating and scattering the Only a year later the old enemies of the Israelites, the Philistines, came up in large force and encamped in Michmash, within two or three miles of the royal residence, and less than ten miles from Gilgal, where Saul was, with only 3,000 troops, and those greatly terrified, while the great mass of the people had fled, and hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits. Yet this formidable Philistine force was finally

routed, and driven back to Beth-Aven by the courage of two men, Jonathan and his armor-bearer. The battle which followed did not seriously cripple the Philistines, and very soon they reappeared at Ephes-dammim, between Shoco and Azekah, about fifteen miles southwest from Jerusalem, and this time with Goliath, a giant of the original race who has preceded the Philistines in settling this part of Palestine, as their champion. The defeat which followed the death of Goliath at the hands of David, was the severest blow which they had received, and served to keep them quiet for several years.

During Saul's persecution of David, which occupied several of the later years of his reign, the places, to which he pursued David, are all within the hill country or wilderness of Judah, in the south of Palestine; Keilah, which David and his men so bravely rescued from the Philistines, only to be obliged to escape from its treacherous inhabitants, who sought to betray him to Saul; Ziph, the hill of Hachilah, Jeshimon, Maon, a wild, dense forest; Carmel, near by, a more open hill-slope, were all in the wilderness of Judæa, that wild, mountainous district, half desert, half forest, but with fertile oases, and thousands of caves, which forms the southern portion of the table-land west of the Jordan, and stretches the entire length of the Dead sea, which lies thousands of feet below, in the deep cleft which earthquakes have rent for it. Beyond the Dead sea, on the east, rise the hills of Moab, and still beyond, the great and terrible desert; while at the southeast are the rock-carved dwellings of Petra, the caves of the Horites, the heights of Mount Seir, and the pasture lands of Edom. The wilderness of Engedi, where Saul "went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats," was a part of the rocky and beetling line of cliffs which form the eastern wall of the table-land, where it descends precipitously to the The pass of Engedi is about midway of the western shore of the Dead sea. Dead sea, and though the Moabite armies are said to have repeatedly scaled it, to attack Israel from the south, the pass is so steep and difficult that it seems to have been only practicable for wild goats. In one of the largest of the numerous caves of these cliffs David and his men were concealed when Saul and his staff entered it. Here, a second time, Saul was ot his mercy, but he contented himself with cutting off a portion of his robe, and a second time brought the king to confess his wrong. After a time, David escaped to Gath, and acquired the good will of the Philistine king. Here he busied himself in the destruction of the old and bitter enemies of Israel, the wandering tribes of the Southern desert, the Amalekites and their kindred. As these were not related to the Philistines, but belonged to the still earlier race which had inhabited that region, there was no danger of the Philistines taking offence.

But Saul's career was about to close. After years of peace, though not of happiness to the moody and half-insane king, the Philistines again declared war against him, and passing along the plain, by the coast of the Mediterranean sea, marched with a very large and well-equipped force across the plain of Esdraelon and pitched their camp in Shunem, on its eastern border. Saul had gathered his forces on Mount Gilbon, some six or eight miles farther south: but he was suffering from despair and the belief that God had forsaken him. Prompted by this conviction, he went with trusted attendants by night from his camp on Mount Gilbou, past the outskirts of the Philistine camp at Shunem, to the little village of Endor. on one of the slopes of the hill of Moreh, which abounds in caves and water springs, to consult a somewhat famous witch, as to the result of the next day's battle. The disasters of the battle need not be recounted here. defeat was so complete that the Israelites, of the cities near the battle-field. fled and abandoned their homes, which were occupied by the Philistines. The bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the walls of the town of Beth-Shan or Beth-Shean, a fortified town southeast of Gilboa, and overlooking the Jordan valley, from whence they were rescued by the brave inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilcad, in gratitude for his deliverance of their city many years before.

While this battle was in progress, Ziklag, a town in the extreme south, given to David by Achish, king of Gath, had, in the absence of its defenders, been stormed by the Amalekites, as an act of revenge, and all its women and children and property been carried away. David promptly pursued these freebooters and recovered all their prey, and that which they had taken from other towns, and sent portions of the booty to the elders of the numerous small towns of southern Judah whom he knew—a wise act of policy.

3. David was anointed king in Hebron, but for seven and a half years ruled only over the southern tribes, Judah and Simeon and portions of the other tribes, the greater part being adherents to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and his general, Abner. The violent deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth, however, caused the transference of the whole kingdom to David; and one of his first acts was the capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and its establishment as the national capital. His old enemies and whilom friends, the Philis-

whes, came up to assault him twice in the valley or plain of Rephaim, four or five miles southwest of Jerusalem, and were signally defeated: the second time being driven back to the maritime plain. The subsequent wars of David were mostly with nations outside of Palestine, as with the Ammonites, the Syrians of Zobah and Damascus, Edom or Idumæa, Hamath, etc. Among his numerous wives one was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, a tract thought to be in the northeast of Bashan, or, at all events, east of the upper Jordan. This daughter of Talmai was the mother of Absalom, and when that proud and ambitious young prince was in disgrace with his father, he fled to his grandfather's court, whence he was brought back by Joab, and where he plotted the conspiracy to dethrone his father. When that conspiracy ripened, and David was forced to fly from Jerusalem, as he descended the farther slope of the Mount of Olives, on his way to the Jordan, at Bahurim, Shimei came out and cursed him. It was a sad journey which David and his brave and true friends made that night to the fords of the Jordan below Jericho; and almost as sad, that long and wearisoms march among the hills, and over the highland plain, to distant Mahanaim, among the hills of Argob in castern Gilead, about seventy miles northeast from Jerusalem; but once arrived there, he was surrounded by warm and powerful friends, and his spirits revived. The battle which followed was fought in "the wood of Ephraim," an extensive forest, probably on the high plateau west of Mahanaim, and not far from that city, and there occurred Absalom's death. After David's return to Jerusalem, and the revolt of Sheba, the son of Bichri, the scene of battle and siege changed to Abel-Bctb-Maachah, near Dan, in the extreme north of Palestine.

Solomon's domain was larger than his father's, and his reign was so peaceful that there is very little of geographical interest in it. His strong alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, brought that maritime power into prominence in the Biblical history; and Tyre, Zidon, Zarephath, and other cities of Phænicia, and the forests of Lebanon, became at once renowned. Ezion-Geber, the port at the head of the Red sea, is also noticed as a newly-acquired scaport of Solomon's, from whence he and Hiram sent ships on trading voyages into the Indian ocean. The erection of the temple, and of Solomon's palaces, made Jerusalem the religious as well as the civil capital, and with its new and larger wall, rendered it a city of remarkable beauty and of great strength. Solomon also built Baalath and Tadmor in the wilderness, cities of great extent and beauty, beyond the bounds of Palestine, and rebuilt, as massive fortresses, Gezer, and Bethboron the

nether, Hazor and Megiddo, fortified towns, which were intended to be impregnable defences of the passes, which led from the maritime plain to the summit of the western slope of the hill country, or table-land, west of the Jordan.

The revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, after Solomon's death, led to some changes, and the eventual separation, in this small territory, of the kingdom of Israel from the kingdom of Judah. The boundaries of the latter kingdom varied at different times, but the lands claimed by Israel, though not always held by it, during the two hundred and fifty years of its peparate existence, did not greatly vary. The boundary between the two kingdoms extended from the mouth of the El-Aujeh, about three miles north of Joppa, to and below Bethel, in a southeast direction, and thence a little south of east to the fords of the Jordan, and east of that river, the country of Moab as far as the Arnon, about midway of the eastern shore of the Dead sea; while this and all of the region claimed by the Hebrews, east of the Jordan, was nominally a part of the kingdom of Israel. In reality, Syria, Ammon or Moab held actual possession of most of this region east of the Jordan, the greater part of the time that the kingdom of Israel existed. The kingdom of Judah, occupying originally only that portion of Palestine west of the Jordan and south of the line above described, and having a territory about as large as that part of the State of Connecticut west of the Connecticut river, eventually, under Jehoshaphat and Asa, extended its bounds to Elath, at the head of the Red sea, taking in the greater part of the Edomite kingdom.

The two kingdoms were, at some periods of their history, densely peopled. At one time the kingdom of Israel must have had nearly six millions of inhabitants, and Judah over five millions. Desolating wars, famines and pestilences, subsequently greatly reduced their numbers.

The southern kingdom (Judah) did not add much to the number of its notable towns and cities, though they became larger as the population increased. Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethshemesh, Geba, Mizpeh, Libnah, Hebron, Beersheba, and Bethlehem, were all that attained any historic notoriety. The northern kingdom, on the contrary, built many new cities. Jeroboam, the founder of the kingdom of Israel, had his capital at Bethel, and erected the two golden calves there, and at Dan, in the extreme north of Palestine. His successors reigned at first at Tirzah, north of Mount Ebal, but Omri, the father of Ahab, purchased the hill Samaria of Shemer, and erected his capital there, which was greatly beautified by his successors. Shechem (the

present Nablous), near Samaria, was also a large city, and the towns of the north, Abel-Meholah, Kedesh, Abel-Beth-Maachah, Hazor, Ijon, Janoah, as well as Jezreel, on the plain of Esdraelon, and Megiddo, west of that plain, were fortified towns of great strength, though some of them, as well as several of the strong towns east of the Jordan, were captured and depopulated by Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, during the reign of Pekah.

Two hundred and fifty-four years after the revolt of Jeroboam, the kingdom of Israel was utterly blotted out, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; its capital, Samaria, taken and razed to its foundations; all the cities destroyed. and all the principal inhabitants of the kingdom to the number of some hundreds of thousands carried as captives into Assyria, and either slain or scattered in different provinces of Assyria and Media. The poorer classes, and especially those who had attempted to observe the pure worship of Jehovah, drifted back to the kingdom of Judah, which thenceforward exercised a kind of protectorate over them, and extended its sway northward to Bethel and other towns in the southern part of Israel. After some years the king of Assyria attempted to colonize some of his other captives, mostly from the banks of the Euphrates, and the Orontes, in the cities and towns These were idolaters, and at first many of them were destroyed Eventually, they were partially instructed by Israelite by wild beasts. priests sent to them by the Assyrian king, and professed to worship Jehovah, but mingled their own idolatrous worship with his. From these mixed races, who also intermarried with the Jews who remained in the land, sprang the Samaritans, a nation thoroughly hated and despised by the Jews, and who repaid that hatred with the bitterest malice. Samaria was rebuilt by them, though in a poor fashion, and they became a somewhat numerous though still a tributary people to the Assyrian, Babylonian or Medo-Persian power.

The kingdom of Judah lasted one hundred and thirty-two years longer than that of Israel, though, for much of that time, it had been, in some sort, tributary to the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. But at length the time came when the long prophesied captivity commenced. Jerusalem was destroyed, and three successive trains of captives, within a period of twenty-four years, took away all its principal inhabitants, and the land lay waste, except such cultivation as the very poor bestowed upon it, for about fifty years.\*

<sup>\*</sup> The seventy years of the captivity were reckoned from the first deportation of captives, eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

4. After the almost miraculous return of the captives and their children, Wie temple and the city of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and many new towns were The region occupied by the returned captives was not the whole of Palestine, for the Samaritans, who, like them, acknowledged the authority of the Medo-Persians, and, later, of Alexander, of the Syrian or Egyptian kings, and finally of Rome, claimed and held the central portion, west of the Jordan; and though Galilee in the north, and portions of the lands east of the Jordan, were claimed by the Jews, yet considerable portions of the inhabitants of all of Palestine except Judea (as the former kingdom of Judah was now called) were Greeks, Romans, Idumæans, Egyptians, the various nations of Asia Minor, Arabs, and Ethiopians; who mingled with the Jews, and made up a medley of peoples, who had no common sympathies. The Jewish element was predominant in Judæa, and in Galilee was perhaps as numerous as all the others, but east of the Jordan it was in a small minority. The Galneans made up in patriotism and fierce fanatidsm, for their lack of numbers. For more than 350 years they were governed by satraps, but their own high-priests were their real rulers, except in the last resort. These became unworthy to rule, and were the mere tools of the monarchs, Persian, Greek, Syrian, and Egyptian, into whose power they fell. The temple was polluted, the worship of Jehovah forbidden, and the Mosaic laws trampled upon, until a revolt, headed by Mattathias, an old but heroic and God-fearing priest, commenced, and the Syrian kings were resisted by him and his brave and patriotic sons, the Maccabees, or Asmonean princes. During the hundred and thirty years which followed, B. C. 167 to B. C. 37, the Jews never had a completely independent government; but, except for the tribute money which they had to pay, they were substantially their own rulers. But in the fourth or fifth generation, the Asmonæan dynasty had become weak and worthless, and Antipater and his son Herod. Edumæan adventurers, usurped the power, the latter eventually as a vassal of the Romans, and held it till after the birth of Christ. Indeed, Palestine was ruled partly by his descendants, and partly by Roman governors, until the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70.

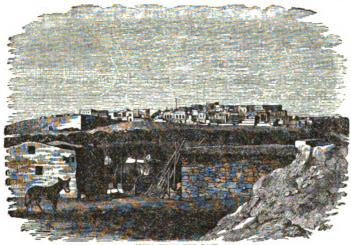
This period of five or six hundred years from the captivity to the destruction of the Jewish capital had wrought many changes in the names and location of places in Palestine. Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza, Shechem or Sichem, Mizpeh, Bethloron, Bethel, and Bethshan, still retained their old names, though many of them were greatly changed in all but the name. The temple built by Herod on Mount Moriah was

almost as gorgeous as that of Solomon; the other public buildings and palaces of Jerusalem were even more magnificent than in his time; and its new and solid walls and towers were far stronger than ever before. Jericho. too, had been rebuilt, to suit the voluptuous tastes of the Egyptian queen; and several of the other cities had been greatly improved and strongly fortified. Modin had come into notice as the home and birthplace of the Maccabees; Bethsura, south of Jerusalem, was a fortress of immense strength; Azotus (the ancient Ashdod) was one of the chief cities of the sea-coast, and Herod and his sons had multiplied beautiful cities, with a lavish expenditure. On the ruins of Samaria, which had been plowed and sown with salt by John Hyrcanus, had risen the city of Sebaste, named in honor of Augustus Cæsar; on the coast, Joppa, with its orchards and gardens, presented a pleasant sight; and a short distance north of it, Cæsarea, another of Herod's cities, named in honor of his patron, an important port and the subsequent capital of the province, looked out upon the sea; while above the bold headland of Carmel, Ptolemais (the present Akka), named in honor of the Egyptian kings, had an active commerce. On the western slope of the hill country or plateau, west of the Jordan, were, beginning nearly opposite Jerusalem, Nicopolis, Lydda, Arimathea, the home of Joseph, the councillor, Antipatris, another of the Herodian cities; and on and above the plain of Esdraelon, Nain, distinguished by the miracle of bringing the dead to life, Nazareth, the boyhood's home of our Lord, Cana, the site of the wedding miracle, Sepphoris, a city founded by Herod. The sea of Chinneroth, Gennesaret, the sea of Tiberias, or the sea of Galilee, for by all these names it was known, comes, for the first time in Jewish history, into marked prominence. On its southwest shore, Herod Antipas had built Tiberias, a beautiful city, but long shunned for its unhealthiness, and because it was built over the graves of the dead. Farther north, on the west shore, were Dalmanutha, Magdala, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and at a short distance from the lake, Chorazin and the northern or upper Bethsaida. On the castern shore were Gergasa, Gamala, and a little farther south, Gadara. Still farther to the north, close to the foothills of Mount Hermon, was Cæsarea Philippi, or Paneas, a city and temple to the honor of the Cæsars, built by Philip, another of Herod's sons. All these towns are mentioned. and some of them many times, in the Gospels. With the exception of Tiberias, which He never entered, the streets of these cities and villages were trodden by those blessed feet, which for our sins were nailed unto the cruel cross. Other and smaller villages or towns connected with the gospel

history are: Bethabara, in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, and at one of its principal fords, where our Lord was baptized; the Mountain of the Temptation, generally believed to be Mount Quarantania, northwest of Jericho; Bethphage and Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives; the Mount of Olives itself, opposite Jerusalem, across the brook or stream Kidron, with its thousand sacred associations, and above all, with its Garden of Gethsemane, amid the shadow of whose olive trees that night of agony was passed. Emmaus, eight or ten miles northwest of Jerusalem, whither the two disciples went after the resurrection; Ephraim, about twelve miles north-northeast of Jerusalem, where Jesus remained for a time during the winter before his crucifixion (John xi. 54); Jacob's well, near Sychar or Shechem, now Nablous, where He met the Samaritan woman; near by, Joseph's tomb, spoken of in the Old Testament; and some distance to the northeast, Shalem or Salim or Aenon, where John baptized. Machaerus, a fortified castle on the frowning and overhanging cliffs east of the Dead sea, though not mentioned by name, is identified as the prison in which John the Baptist was confined, and in which he was beheaded. Juttah, south of Hebron, in the hill country of Judæa, is supposed to have been the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, and the place visited by Mary, the mother of Jesus; and the wilderness of Judæa, east of Juttah and Hebron, with its caverns and beetling cliffs, was the place of his hermit life "till the day of his showing unto Israel."

The route taken by the parents of our Lord in the flight into Egypt from Bethlehem was almost due south from Bethlehem, the place of his birth, through Hebron and Juttah, to the isthmus of Suez and the Nile. in its length and its breadth, the Holy Land was traversed by our blessed Lord. Most especially are its mountains identified with his presence. The rounded dome of Tabor, Nebi Ismail, and the other elevated summits in the vicinity of Nazareth, must have been his chosen places of prayer in his youth and early manhood; the Horns of Hattin were the scene of the delivery of the "Sermon on the Mount." The mountains east of the sea of Galilee witnessed some of his greatest miracles; on one of the summits of Hermon he was transfigured; as we come southward, it was under the shadow of Gerizim, and with the ruins of its temple in full sight, that he held his conversation with the Samaritan woman: Mount Quarantania. north of Jericho, was the scene alike of his temptation and triumph; the heights around Bethlehem were covered with the angel choirs, who greeted the world at his advent; the skull-shaped hill north of Jerusalem, named Calvary, witnessed his crucifixion; while the Mount of Olives, most blessed of all, was the scene alike of his coronation, of his frequent and fervent prayers, of the agony of the garden, and of his ascension to the glory and majesty of his throne on high. The footprints of his feet are on the hills, in the plains and in the valleys of Palestine, and the echoes of his voice, in prayer, in blessing, and in warning and entreaty, have been heard throughout all its borders. Blessed and holy indeed is that land, whatever disasters may have since befallen it, for it has been consecrated by the presence of the Son of God.

As we draw nearer to the period of the overthrow of the Jewish power, and the destruction of Jerusalem, we find that the landscape widens, and



JOPPA FROM THE EAST.

Palestine is not the chief seat of the Christian church, nor the mother-land of Christianity. The apostles did, indeed, as they were commanded, begin at Jerusalem, and the converts went from thence to all parts of the known world; but very early, Antioch, with its hundred thousand disciples, became the chief city of the Christian faith, and Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Thessalonica, Alexandria, Edessa, Pella, Babylon, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Rome, were more conspicuous than Jerusalem for their Christian inhabitants, even in the lifetime of the apostles. Besides Jerusalem, the only places in Palestine named in the Acts of the Apostles, or the remaining books of the New Testament, are: Samaria, where there was a

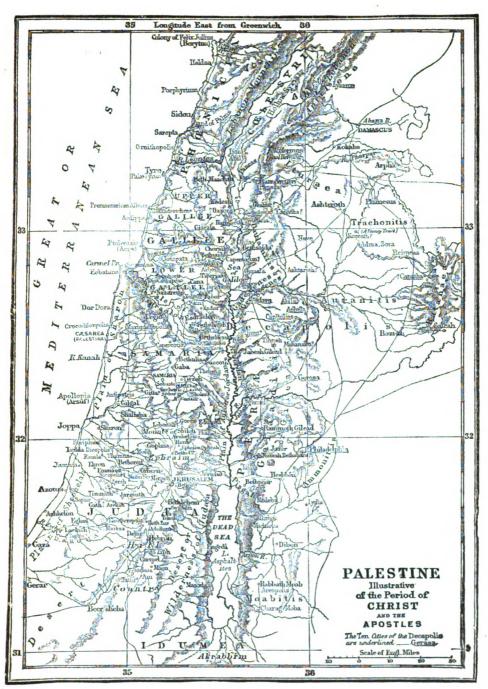
great revival under the preaching of Philip; Joppa, where Peter had his vision; Gaza and Azotus, Philistine cities incidentally mentioned; Lydda and Saron or Sharon, cities of the Sharon plain; Ptolemais and Cæsarea, the latter the Roman capital of the province of Syria; and just beyond the borders of the Holy Land, Tyre and Sidon, and at the northeast, Damascus, the scene of Paul's conversion.

5. After the death of Herod, surnamed the Great, the Romans made a new division of Palestine; the province of Judæa, which included Samaria, was under a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate filling that office during most of our Lord's life; Galilee with Decapolis (the ten cities), and Perea, the ancient Gilead, and Moab, forming the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas; while the region north, northeast, east, and southeast of the sea of Galilee, extending to the desert, was the tetrarchy of Philip, another son of Herod. Herod Agrippa I, maintained a sort of sway as a vassal prince over most of dalestine. After A. D. 52, another change was made; Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, Perea and Idumæa, were included in the province of Judæa, under Felix and Festus, while the kingdom of Agrippa II. comprised only what had been the tetrarchy of Philip. These divisions were annulled after the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70. For the next two centuries Palestine was but an obscure and poor province of the Roman empire, until after the conversion of Constantine, when it became a land of pilgrimage for Christians from all lands; Christian temples were reared on its holy places, and every place connected with the history of our Lord was eagerly sought out. In the seventh century after Christ, the country was invaded by the Persians, and Jerusalem captured in A. D. 614; it was retaken by the imperial forces of the eastern empire; again attacked by the Arabs, and was finally surrendered to the Khalif Omar and the Saracens, in A. D. 637. mained in possession of the Moslems for four hundred and sixty-two years, when the crusaders carried it by storm, after the most frightful slaughter, in July, A. D. 1099. It was recaptured by Saladin in A. D. 1187; was annexed to the Ottoman empire in 1517, and has remained under the Turkish control to the present time. The country is not densely inhabited, for wandering Arab tribes traverse it, and rob and plunder most of its inhabitants, the greater part of whom are Syrians, who speak Arabic; the Christian Syrians being of pure descent, and the Mohammedans of mixed races. The other inhabitants are a few Jews, Armenians, and Turks, some Druses, especially in the Hauran, and in Galilee and Carmel; and a small number of English and American settlers, missionaries, etc.

6. The only places of note now are Jerusalem, Gaza, Hebron, Joppa, Acre or Akka, Nablous, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Beirut, and beyond the border, Damascus. The population of Palestine does not probably exceed 900,000, of whom from 80,000 to 90,000 are Christians, 12,000 Jews, and the rest Mohammedans. A Mohammedan mosque occupies the probable site of the temple, and many former Christian churches have been converted into mosques. The Holy Land is regarded as sacred, alike by Greek and Roman Catholics, Armenians, Protestants, Jews and Mohammedans; but the Turkish rule has made much of it a desert. The labors of English and especially of American missionaries in Palestine, in Mount Lebanon, Beirut and other portions of Syria, have been greatly honored of God in the conversion of many of the people, and have also been the means of aiding in the understanding of God's holy word.

Within a few years past societies have been organized, both in England and the United States, for the purpose of a thorough scientific exploration of Palestine, and their efforts have been crowned with great success. We shall soon have a large map of Palestine, on which will be recorded with accuracy every place named in the Scriptures as belonging to Palestine; and the elevations and depressions of the country will be given by faithful and repeated measurements. So shall we learn to understand God's word better, and comprehend more fully his wonderful works among his ancient and covenant people.







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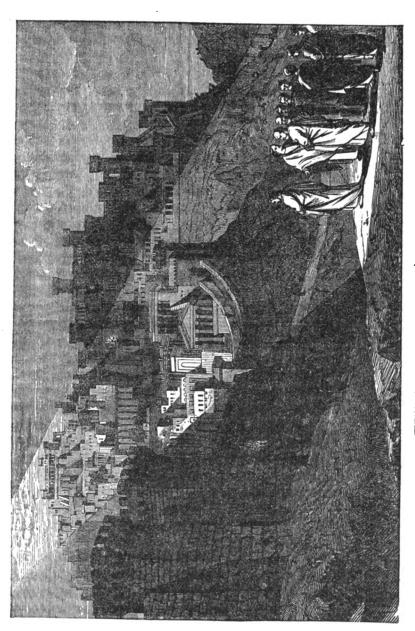
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### THE NEW TESTAMENT.



S was set forth in the introduction to the OLD TESTAMENT, the two divisions of the Scriptures represent, not the old and new wills of God, in his benevolent intentions toward men, but rather the earlier and later portions of that will; both are inspired of God; both are valid, and to be considered in any study of his disposition and dispensation of love toward us. But while the former may be regarded as the main body of his will, the latter (the New Testament) may with equal propriety be regarded as the codicils, duly

attested, and of equal validity with the previous will; while they provide for a different and greatly wider distribution of the inheritance.

But the New Testament has its scope and character enlarged in another direction, thus rendering it an integral part of the divine will. Old Testament, the great GIFT, which was to include and surpass all other gifts, had not yet been bestowed upon man; it was only promised; while in the New Testament, the Saviour, "the gift of God," has come; is made flesh and dwells with man. In the Old Testament, this gift is promised "The star is to arise out of Jacob." "Unto only to the Hebrew nation. us," says Isaiah, "a child is born, a son is given; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever." See also the eleventh and the fifty-second chapters of Isaiah; and indeed most of the Messianic prophecies in the prophets. In the few instances, like that of Isaiah xi. 10, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious," where the extension of the plan of redemption to the Gentiles is mentioned or suggested, the Jews regarded it, as only signifying a large accession of proselytes from the heathen.

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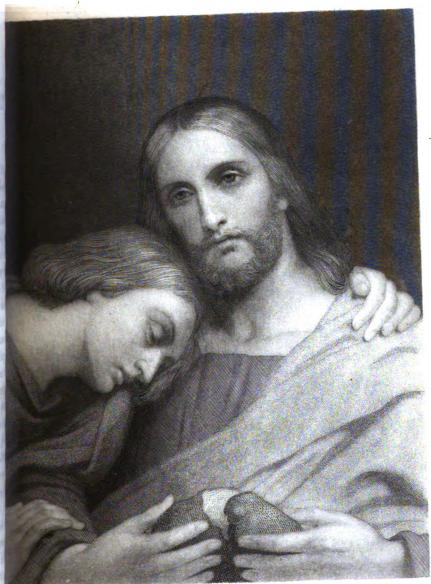
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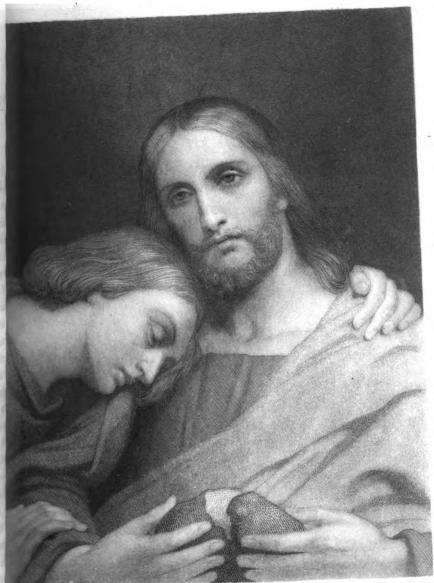
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CHRIST AND SAINTUNNE

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CHRIST AND SAINT JOHN

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But in the New Testament we find not only that the Messiah, the Saviour and King, has come, but that his chosen people—they who have been for nearly two thousand years the sole recipients of God's revealed word, and to whom this wondrous Gift and inheritance had been primarily promised—have rejected the Gift, and refused to own the Messiah. A few hundreds or thousands of Jews have received him, and rejoice in the mercy and goodness of God; but the greater part of the nation, including all its rulers, reject and crucify him.

The offer of the heavenly inheritance was first made to the Jews, but on their blind and wicked refusal of it, God offers it to the Gentiles, and adds this codicil to his will, cutting off the Jews, till after the fulness of the Gentiles shall have been gathered into the household of faith, and made heirs of the promises. We find this expressly declared in Acts xiii. 46, 47: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you (the Jews): but, seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou (Christ) shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

When God gives, he gives liberally and bountifully; more bountifully than we can ask or even think. And so it was in this offer of salvation to the Gentile or heathen world. They had been great sinners; not liking to retain God in their knowledge, they had made to themselves idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, and had worshipped and adored them; but now, as they accepted the offer of salvation, God gave to them, not only this redemption through the blood of his Son, but a place and inheritance among the sanctified or holy ones.

Henceforth they were the spiritual Israel, the heirs of the promises; Abraham was their father, and Christ, the promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, was their elder brother; they were to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, while the natural descendants of these patriarchs were to be cast out. Included in their inheritance was the blessed remembrance of Enoch, who walked with God; of Noah, the preacher of righteousness; of Moses, the meek but wise lawgiver of Israel; of Joshua, the valiant leader; of Samuel, the prophet; of David, the poet-king and sweet singer of Israel; theirs, by a strong and peculiar tie, were the memories of Isaiah, the noblest of the prophets; of Daniel, greatly beloved of God; of Habbakuk, whose grand

hymn of praise and prayer reverberates forever through the vault of heaven; of Malachi, last of the prophet band; and of the host of apostles and martyrs of the new covenant. Whatever might be their lot here, crowns and thrones of glory awaited them above; and Jesus, who calls himself their elder brother, will draw them around his throne, to be the witnesses and participants of his glory.

The whole world is thus infinitely the gainer by this enlargement of the apparent scope of the divine will, in these New Testament codicils. The resurrection and the blessed life of the righteous in heaven had been dimly foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel; and not only the life beyond, but the city of God above, with its jasper walls, its pearly gates, its golden streets, and the light-giving throne of the Lord God and the Lamb, are all parts of the inheritance, bequeathed to those who are called to be saints, by this revelation of the divine will.

Let us now examine briefly into the contents of this new or later will of God, as contained in the New Testament. We have, first, four separate biographies of our blessed incarnate Lord, portraying his character from as many different positions, neither of them complete as a biography, nor the one attempting to supply the deficiencies or omissions of the other; written at considerable distances of time and place from each other, and under circumstances and conditions, which made any collusion impossible; and yet the four together giving us a more comprehensive and satisfactory idea of his character, than any single memoir, however carefully compiled, could do.

These biographies are undoubtedly by the persons whose names they bear. Matthew, sometimes called the "publican," from his being the chief collector of the Roman taxes at Capernaum and its vicinity, was one of the twelve apostles sent out by Christ; he wrote with the fulness of knowledge which came of personal intimacy, and in the Hebrew, or rather the Aramaic, a corrupt dialect of Hebrew, spoken by the Jews after the captivity; his gospel has been called the *Jewish gospel*,\* because it was addressed to the Jews who believed on Christ, and because it spoke of him from the Jewish point of view, making frequent references to the prophecies concerning him, and alluding, without explanation, to the customs, habits, and religious practices of the Jews of Palestine; it has also been called the kingly gospel,

<sup>\*</sup> Rev. H. G. Weston, D. D., President of Crozer Theological Seminary, in "The Gospel according to Matthew."

because its references to Christ are invariably to his kingly office. To Matthew, our Lord is always the King in Zion, the royal heir, David's greater Son. But it is pre-eminently the gospel of the rejection. A tone of sadness pervades it, that, coming to his own peculiar people, they rejected him and his message of love, and this rejection of Christ gives the tone and key-note to the whole gospel.

The Gospel according to Mark was written by that disciple, probably "John, whose surname was Mark," sister's son or cousin to Barnabas, and a companion of Paul, Barnabas and Peter. He is generally supposed to have been longest with Peter, and to have written out the history of the Saviour's life, substantially, as Peter was in the habit of preaching it, before there were any written gospels. There are, however, many things, both in his gospel and in the brief notices of him, which we find in the New Testament. leading us to believe that he was an eye-witness of some of the events he so vividly describes. The object of his biography of Christ seems to be to exhibit our Lord in action; to show his miracles and mighty works. He omits nearly all his discourses, like the sermon on the mount, or many of the addresses in the Gospel according to John, and most of the parables. His style is terse and comprehensive, and his description vivid. As this gospel was intended for the Gentiles, and especially for those of Italy and the west, it was written in Greek, but with many Latin expressions and words, and Jewish words or names are often explained.

Luke, the writer of the third gospel, was probably a Greek of Troas or Philippi, possibly a Jewish proselyte, certainly a Christian convert, and in some of Paul's journeyings and imprisonments, his most intimate and trusted companion. It is an old tradition, that this gospel was suggested and in part dictated by Paul, but the gospel itself gives no evidence of it. The writer had evidently spent much time in Judsa and Jerusalem, and the minute accuracy of his description of persons and places, and especially the fulness of his narrative of the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, which could only have been derived from members of the family of Jesus, indicate conclusively that he possessed other sources of information than those derived from Paul.

His gospel has been called the universal gospel, and also the gospel of acceptance, for, while Matthew chronicles sadly the rejection of the Lord of life, by the Jewish nation, Luke exults that the offers of salvation are open to all the family of man; and that a great host whom no man can number will accept the proffered salvation. He does not exclude the Jew from

this great blessing, but he finds room for the belief that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father. The parables and miracles are very fully detailed in this gospel; the discourses not so much so; but two things are conspicuous in it: its full account of the circumstances attending the birth of Jesus and John, and the minute narrative of all the events of that last journey of the Saviour, from Galilee to Jerusalem, by way of Perea, just before his crucifixion. None of the other gospels give this. This gospel was probably written about A. D. 56; before the Acts of the Apostles, of which he was also the author. It is supposed to have been written at Rome; though this is not certain.

These three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are often called the synoptic gospels, because they bear a resemblance to each other, in treating of the life of Christ from the human point of view, and while agreeing in regard to his divine character and origin, make his human nature and his earthly life, sufferings and death, their principal topic.

The fourth gospel, that according to John, differs from the other three in many respects, yet it is as essential to the complete view of the life and character of our Lord as any one of them, or, perhaps, as all of the other three. It was written by the apostle John, who had not only been an eyewitness of the things concerning which he wrote, but had been admitted to that closer intimacy with the Saviour, which caused him to be known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." His opportunity for knowing all that any man could know of Christ, was far greater than that of any other person who ever lived.

This gospel was written considerably later than the others; probably some time after the destruction of Jerusalem; and its writer undoubtedly had the other gospels before him when he wrote. He omits many things which they have related, as not caring to repeat them, and narrates many important miracles, which they had overlooked. He gives also many conversations, discussions, addresses, and prayers of Christ, which they had not inserted, and gives prominence to the Judæan portion of our Lord's ministry as the others had to the Galilean. In all these particulars this gospel is invaluable, as giving us the facts of those portions of our Lord's active life which, without it, would have been unknown to the world.

But the most important characteristic of this gospel, and the one which has caused the fiercest assaults on its authenticity and inspiration, by sceptical writers of the present day, is its full and unequivocal declarations concerning the divinity of Christ. The other evangelists, while they speak.

of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ of God, usually call him "the Son of man," sometimes "the Son of David." With John, he is "The Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God." "The Son of God," who was made flesh and dwelt among us, "God manifest in the flesh." "He and his Father are one." "God speaks from heaven, and declares him his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased." This gospel is, then, peculiarly the gospel of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

With these four gospels, the revelation of the biography of Christ is complete. Whether we desire to look at Christ as the Messiah, the promised King and Deliverer of the Jews, and rejected by them; as the miracle-worker, who had power on earth to forgive sins; as the Saviour of all who would believe on him, as the God-man incarnate in our nature, the Babe of Bethlehem, the carpenter's son, the Nazarene, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, the meek and patient sufferer at Gethsemane and Calvary, or the Son of God, one with the Father, who hath brought life and immortality to light, the Abolisher of death, the risen, triumphant, and ascended Lord, we find the whole story in these four gospels, and only there.

Other pretended gospels there were, indeed, and many of them; some, the work of good but weak-minded men, who had gathered the most absurd traditions of the infancy and childhood of Christ, and some, the work of wicked blasphemers and enemies of Christ, who sought to throw contempt on his blessed name; but the perusal of a single page of any one of them was sufficient to show that they were neither inspired nor true; and no one of the early churches was ever deceived into accepting any of them.

After this fourfold biography comes "The Acts of the Apostles," also written by Luke, the companion of Paul, and author of the third gospel; a history of the formal organization of the Church of Christ, the heir, with her blessed Lord, of this glorious inheritance, devised to her by the will of God. This book has for its main object and aim, to narrate the fulfilment of the promise of God, as declared by our Lord just before his ascension, of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples; the complete organization of the Christian Church, and the results of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in the conversion of great numbers, who very soon carried the glad tidings to all parts of the Roman empire. In the first part of the book, the interest centres in Peter, the bold and fearless leader, who opens the door of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. As the Jews, as a nation, reject Christ and his gospel, another leader is raised up, from the strictest sect of the

Jews, and himself for some years a fierce persecutor of the disciples, but who becomes, by God's grace, the great apostle to the Gentiles; and the remainder of the book is occupied with the labors, trials and triumphs of Paul. Incidentally, it sets forth all the difficulties and troubles which attended the establishment of Christianity, both among the Jews and Gentiles; the heroism and manliness of the great apostle, and his manifold trials and persecutions; and presents, as no mere history could do, the growth and orderly development of the Church of Christ.

There were, of course, apocryphal imitations of the Acts, professing to give accounts of the labors and sufferings of others of the apostolic band. Writers on the New Testament enumerate thirteen of these, some of them written within a hundred years after this book, and a part of them possibly written by men of good intentions; but they are all so silly and childish, and the stories they contain are so absurd, that none of them were ever received as either inspired or true by the churches.

Next follow the epistles, twenty-one in number. Of these, thirteen were certainly written by Paul—nine of them to various Christian churches, one to a private individual (Philemon), and three, generally called Pastoral Epistles, to Timothy and Titus, as pastors or bishops of churches. The Epistle to the Hebrews does not bear the name of its author; but while it has been attributed variously to Paul, to Luke, to Clement, to Barnabas, to Apollos, and to other prominent Christian leaders, its inspired character has not to any considerable extent been called in question. Seven other letters, all of them brief, and usually called General Epistles, bear the names, one of James, the brother of our Lord; two that of Peter; three of John the Divine, the author of the gospel, and one of Jude or Judas, the brother of James.

These epistles or letters are varied in their character, but all breathe the spirit of Christ, and many of them are specially devoted to the defence of particular Christian doctrines. Those of Paul, which are addressed to the different churches, mostly founded by his labors, are full of instruction, both doctrinal and practical, as to their future lives. The teachings of Christ in all the doctrines which they are to believe are rehearsed and explained; the duties of the Christian life, and especially of life in the family and the church, are clearly laid down, and the necessary discipline of the church is enforced. To those just converted from heathenism and its gross vices, there was great need of this instruction; and there was a necessity for guarding them, also, against the teachings of those who still regarded the Jewish

ritual and traditions as binding upon all Christian disciples, as if they were only proselytes to the Jewish faith; and of those who were seeking to combine Greek philosophy with Christianity, and thus of leading the people astray. The Pastoral Epistles were primarily intended to define the duties of the pastors or bishops, and of the other office-bearers of the church, though the second letter to Timothy is largely occupied with exhortations to Christian firmness and endurance, in the violent persecutions under which the church was then suffering, at the hands of the cruel Roman Emperor Nero.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, addressed to the Jewish Christians, and other Jews in and out of Palestine, probably shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, is a most masterly argument to prove that the old or Jewish dispensation, with its ceremonial law, its sacrifices and traditions, was completed, fulfilled and closed in the coming of Christ, whom all these sacrifices typified; and that the new or Christian dispensation, with its one Great Sacrifice and its universal scope, had taken its place; and that henceforth there was to be no more sacrifice of animals, and no more of the temple worship, as an atonement for sin. The doubts in regard to its authorship have not prevented its being regarded in all quarters as divinely inspired, and the internal evidence is conclusive on this point.

Of the seven General Epistles, that of James is intended to impress upon the early church the necessity of practical godliness, good works, to illustrate and adorn the Christian profession; a very important point, since many of the converts, both from Judaism and heathenism, had been inclined to the belief that, professing faith in Christ, they were freed from the restraints of the moral as well as of the ceremonial law. This dangerous idea—that Christianity had no necessary connection with morality, and that a professing Christian may, without reproach, lie, steal, commit adultery, or break any other of the commandments—has been too prevalent in all branches of the church in all ages, and shows the absolute necessity of James' warnings. James was the chief pastor of the church at Jerusalem for many years.

The two Epistles of Peter are characteristic of that fervid and earnest apostle; full of exhortations to sound doctrine and holy living, strong denunciations of heretical and false teachers, and with many references to the second coming of our Lord.

The three Epistles of John, "the beloved disciple," are also characteristic of his ardent and loving nature. One of them is addressed to the churches generally: the other two, which are very brief, to individual Christians.



The General Epistle of Jude, supposed to have been a younger brother of our Lord, is very brief, and consists mainly of warnings to the churches against false teachers, and denunciations of them, even more vigorous than those of Peter, while it closes with a beautiful and touching benediction.

Of these seven general epistles, two, the first of John and the first of Peter, were at once received by all the churches as genuine and inspired; two more, the second and third of John, were so received as soon as they became widely known; concerning the remaining three, viz., the Epistle of James, Second of Peter, and the Epistle of Jude, there was more or less dispute; the objection to James being a supposed difference between his teachings and those of Paul; but eventually it was heartily received by all the churches. To the Second Epistle of Peter, it was objected that it differed greatly in style from the first epistle; that the second chapter was substantially like most of the Epistle of Jude, and that its references to Paul were not like Peter. But these objections, on closer examination, mostly disappeared; and the general tone of the epistle was so full of the gospel spirit that it finally, after long controversy, came to be universally received, and was sanctioned as a part of the New Testament by the great councils of the church.

The objections against the Epistle of Jude were its brevity, its alleged reference to apocryphal books, and its repetition of the ideas of the second chapter of 2 Peter. The usual and undoubtedly the true explanation, of this similarity is this: Jude wrote his epistle before the Second Epistle of Peter was written, and it was sent to Alexandria, where the Christian churches were strong, but where also these false teachers were numerous, Peter and Jude were at this time in Babylon or its vicinity, and being in frequent intercourse with each other, the Epistle of Jude was read to Peter. and pleased him, and Jude, being considerably the younger, was employed by Peter as his amanuensis or writer; this Second Epistle of Peter being addressed to the churches in Asia and Asia Minor, Peter desired Jude to communicate these warnings to those churches also in his name. reference to the prophecy of Enoch could not have been to the apocryphal book of Enoch, for that was not then written. By the voice of the churches as expressed in the several councils, after the most rigid examination, all these epistles were finally received as inspired books.

There are also several epistles which circulated largely among the early churches, most of them, probably, written by good men, though not all by those whose names they bear, and all designed apparently for the edification of the churches. These are: The First Epistle of Clement of Rome to the

Corinthians; the so-called Epistle of Barnabas; the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, and also to the Romans and to Polycarp; the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, and the Shepherd of Hermas. Of these the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistle of Ignatius, were probably written in the second century, though, perhaps, neither of them by those whose names they bear. The First Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians is probably genuine, and the earliest of these apocryphal epistles. That of Polycarp is also genuine, but is hardly earlier than A. D. 140. But while the good intention of all these epistles may be admitted, they were so far below the epistles of the New Testament in their tone and character, so lacking in force and spirit, and most of them so wanting in sound doctrine, that they were never, by any considerable number of persons, regarded as inspired. There are still other epistles which have been preserved in an incomplete state, but these are of less value than those we have mentioned.

There were, then, no other epistles, as we have already shown; there were no other gospels, or records like the Acts of the Apostles, which in the judgment of the early Christian fathers, or the early churches, had any claims to be regarded as divinely inspired, and necessary or "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." God in his providence so ordered that the examination of these books by the fathers and the early churches should be very scarching and thorough, and their decision and that of the councils in regard to them was nearly unanimous.

But that there might be no doubt on the subject, since the invention of the art of printing, and particularly within the last two centuries and a half, the whole questions of the authenticity and inspiration of the books of the New Testament, have been gone over anew by hundreds of the most eminent Biblical scholars, with a zeal and carefulness to which no other books have ever been subjected, and the result has been to confirm them all, and their readers, in the conviction that in the New Testament, as we have it, there are all the books that have come down to our times which were truly inspired of God; that all of these were so inspired, and that the other books of the first two centuries after Christ, which professed to divine inspiration, were none of them entitled to be so regarded.

One book more remains to be considered, The Revelation of Saint John the Divine, or, as it is often called, the Apocalypse. That this book was written by John, the son of Zebedee, the apostle and evangelist, and that it

was divinely inspired, was the full conviction of all the early fathers and of the early churches. The attempt of Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, in A. D. 255, to maintain that it was written by another John, and that its inspiration was doubtful, was solely caused by his vexation at the millennial theory, which was then advocated by some other bishops, and for which they quoted John's authority in the Revelation. The book was rejected by several heretical sects, who also repudiated all the epistles except those of Paul; while it was received by others, who rejected all the New Testament except this book and the four gospels.

Its authenticity and inspiration have been admitted by all the councils, and by all the Biblical critics of modern times. Its contents are, as the apostle himself says (i. 19), The things which he saw—the glorified Christ standing in the midst of his churches; the things which were—the condition of the seven churches; and the things which should be hereafter—the progress of Christianity, the judgments to come upon the nations, the final struggle with the powers of evil, the first resurrection, the final judgment, and the glory of the heavenly city and of the redeemed. The style of the book is lofty and glowing; some of its descriptions are among the grandest efforts of human composition, and through it all there runs the fire of a divine inspiration. No one who reads it can doubt that it was written under the influence of the Divine Spirit.

Of course, there have been several attempts to imitate this wonderful book; there are apocalypses of Moses, of Paul, of Ezra, of Peter and of John; spurious books of such utter worthlessness, that it seems a waste ever to have published them. No church, no apostolic father, and no critic of modern times, ever thought of claiming that any of these were inspired.

Thus, then, we have passed in review the books comprising this later portion of the divine will or Testament. We have shown that it describes the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer, the Messiah or Anointed; his rejection by his own nation, the Jews; his sufferings in the garden; his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension; the coming and outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the offer of salvation to the Gentiles and its acceptance; the formation, organization, and growth of the Christian church: its doctrines, ordinances and practice: its persecutions and its present and future triumphs, till the heavenly inheritance shall be bestowed upon the church of the redeemed, and they enter the city of God to be kings and priests forever. What earthly inheritance is to be for a moment compared with this? Yet this glorious heritage belongs to every true believer in Jesus.

### GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

This, the opening book of the New Testament, the Genesis of the later revelation, corresponds, in many point with the first book of the Old Testament. It was originally written in Hebrew, or rather Aramaic, a corrupt dialect of Hebrew, spoken at that time by Syrian Jews, and was afterward translated into Greek. As the purpose of Genesis was, to show how, to a particular family, race, and tribe, the great Redeemer was to be sent, and how, through all the earlier ages, the promise made in the Garden was to be amplified and extended, so in the Gospel according to Matthew, we have the history of the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel, to His own chosen people; of their final and conclusive rejection of Him as their King; and of the extension of His dominion, and the offers of salvation to all nations. It is the beginning of a new and more glorious era; and yet, more than any other book of the New Testament, except, perhaps, the Epistle to the Hebrews, it connects itself with the Old Testament, in its application of prophecies, in its genealogies, its references to Jewish laws and customs, and in its constant use of Old Testament forms of expression concerning the Messiah. It contains more of the discourses or sermons of Christ, more of His miracles, and a larger number of His parables, than either of the other gospels; and it presents all in a systematic order, not chronological, but with the distinct purpose of showing their relations to each other, and to the general object of the gospel. It has twenty-eight chapters, and is particularly full on those points on which the other gospels touch but lightly. It was probably written, primarily, for the Jewish disciples, perhaps within six or eight years after the ascension of Christ, and, at all events, several years earlier than either of the other gospels.

#### The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW I., II.

HIS opening book of the New Testament introduces us into a new era and a new condition of things. When this book was written, nearly four hundred and fifty years had passed since Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, had completed his prophecies; the Jews had been governed by their high-priests, under the authority of foreign monarchs; had been oppressed, persecuted, and slain, and many of them compelled, under fear of death, to deny the God who had preserved and kept them; then they had been for nearly one

hundred and fifty years under the government of prince-priests, who, at first, were wise, and patriotic, and good, but after three or four generations had become corrupt and vile; and they were now ruled by a very wicked king, Herod, who was himself a vassal of the Romans. In these four hundred and fifty years they had become fanatical in their observance of the traditions of the elders or rabbis, insisting on the minutest obedience to them, while

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they openly disobeyed the great principles of the moral law. The Pharisees, the leading sect among them, were self-righteous and hypocritical; they believed in a coming Messiah, but thought he would be a temporal king, and would deliver them from the Romans. They believed also that they alone would have a right to be the officers of the new kingdom which he would set up, and that the common people and all the Gentiles would be shut out from it.

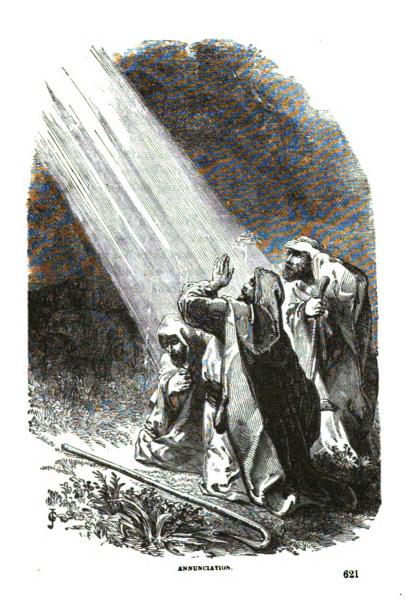
We shall see, as we study this and the other gospels, how different was Christ's kingdom and mission from what they had supposed; and we shall also see what it really was. As we have said, in our Introduction to the New Testament, this first book or gospel is addressed to the Jews, and hence may be called a Jewish gospel; it presents the Messiah in his kingly character,\* and hence is the kingly gospel; but more than all else, it shows sadly but truly, how the Messiah was rejected by his own people, the Jews, and hence has been fittingly called "the Gospel of the rejection." The word "Gospel" has been variously defined; it comes from the old Anglo-Saxon, and signifies good news, tidings or history; it is properly the good news, or history of Christ's taking our nature and becoming our Redeemer, and this is the way in which it is used in these four books. It is sometimes used in a larger sense, as meaning all of God's word or revelation to man. The Greek word which is translated gospel means rather the evangel, or good message, implying that it is a message sent from God.

Matthew, whose surname was Levi, was a native of Galilee. Although a Jew, he had been appointed a publican or tax-gatherer by the Romans, who then ruled over Palestine. These publicans were much hated by the Jews. The taxes were of various kinds; a personal or poll-tax, licenses for fishing, or for trade; export and import duties, etc. All these taxes Matthew collected at his office in Capernaum, when Jesus called him to leave them all, and to follow him. He obeyed the divine call, became one of the apostles, and recorded for the use of the Jewish disciples what he heard, and saw, and knew of the Messiah.

The first chapter of this gospel tells us from whom Jesus descended. It was the first step toward proving that he was the MESSIAH predicted by the prophets. Messiah means anointed. The prophets, priests, and kings of Israel

<sup>\*</sup> Read Matt. ii. 2, ii. 6, 13, iii. 2, iv. 11, 23, v. 22, vi. 13, vii. 28, 29, ix. 35, xiii. 33, 44-47, xiii. 19, 41, xvi. 19, xix. 28, xxi. 5, 9-16, xxiv. 14, xxv. 31, 34, 40, xxvi. 53, xxvii. 51-58, xxviii. 19. Read also, "The Gospel according to Matthew, a Lecture," by Rev. Henry G. Weston, D. D., to whom the writer is indebted for some of these thoughts and references.





were anointed with oil, to signify that God would so pour his holy blessings upon them; and it showed that they were set apart for their particular offices, to attend to those alone. The Messiah, as Jesus is called, more especially bore that name, which is in other words the anointed, or the anointed one. Christ is a name which has also the same meaning. None were ever anointed with such an abundance of gifts and of grace as he was. He was a Prophet, a Priest, and a King at the same time: a prophet, because he taught the way to heaven, besides foretelling many things which were to happen on earth—a priest, because he offered up a sacrifice, and such an one as made all sacrifices of an inferior kind of no use in future, so that they ceased when he offered up himself—and a king, because he was to reign over many hearts, and his subjects should yield him willing obedience in all times to come, and in all parts of the world.

Matthew traces the line of Jesus Christ from Abraham; for God promised to Abraham, in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." It was, therefore, understood by Abraham that one should spring from him, who should indeed bless all the world,—not the Jews only, but the nations of the Gentiles. Matthew, then, in showing that Christ was the Messiah expected, here proves, in the first place, that he had one mark of the Messiah, for he sprang from Abraham.

But this was not enough: Abraham's family branched off in different lines, Isaac's in one branch and Ishmael's in another; and so with the families that followed. But there was one particular line in which the promise was made, and among those of that line from Abraham was David; God had promised him, as we are told in the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, that he would set up his seed—or one of his race, after him, and "establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Matthew proves that Christ sprang from David, as well as from Abraham; and therefore proves that he was of a race from which the Messiah was to come.

It was necessary for Matthew to be thus particular in tracing the entiregenealogy from Abraham to David, and from David to Christ, in order to demonstrate to the Jews, who were great sticklers for pedigree, that Christ was descended on his reputed father's side, and on the mother's also, from David and Abraham.\*

<sup>\*</sup> Some of those people who are very anxious to find errors and contradictions in the Bible have pointed out the objections to this genealogy, that it did not agree with that in Luke iii. 23-38, and that in this several names were omitted; and they have urged that this was a proof that this gospel was not inspired, nor true. These objections are very easily answered. In



The next proof was that, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold, Isa. vii. 14, he was born of a virgin, or of one that was unmarried; for though Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was only her betrothed husband, that is, he was only engaged to her, as we say;—yet that engagement, according to the custom of the Jews, could not be broken, and so he was, to all intents and purposes by law and right, the husband of Mary, though she was a virgin, or as yet not in reality married. Now, Jesus Christ was "conceived" or formed "by the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Ghost who formed the body of the blessed Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary; and St. Matthew tells us, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "God with us" means again—God in flesh, God in our nature.

It was revealed to Joseph, in a dream, that this child was the Messiah; and after Jesus was born, Joseph went to live with Mary.

There was a third sign that Jesus was the Messiah—the anointed and expected Saviour, and this St. Matthew also takes care to tell us. He was "born in Bethlehem of Judæa." There were two places called Bethlehem, and the place where Christ was born was called Bethlehem of Judæa, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulon, which is mentioned in Joshua xix. 15.

The place where Christ should be born was also mentioned in prophecy; "for thus it is written by the prophets; and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of

regard to the first, it may be said that the Jews, like all oriental nations, kept two distinct genealogies, both official, of their royal families—the first showing the line of succession; the second, the private or family genealogy, showing the collateral branches from which the succession was to be continued, if the main line ran out from want of heirs. This was just the case with David's line. Matthew gives the line of royal succession as it stood in the genealogy of the house of David; Luke gives the private or family record, showing that Joseph was descended from Nathan, the elder brother of Solomon, by the same mother (1 Chron. iii. 5), who was entitled to inherit the kingdom on the failure of the line of Solomon. That line did fail in the case of Jeconiah or Jechonias, who was written childless (Jeremiah xxii. 30), and who adopted as his heir, Salathiel, the son of Neri, of the house of Nathan; who was the father of Zerubbabel, the Rhesa or ruling prince after the captivity. There is a mistake here in Luke iii. 27, as Rhesa is not a man's name, but Zerubbabel's official title. Another Jewish law explains the other difficulty, viz., that when the elder son failed to have a son, the son of his brother became his heir, as in the case of Matthan and of Heli, in the genealogy in Luke. Mary, the mother of our Lord, is, by general tradition, said to be the daughter or granddaughter of Jacob, the elder brother of Heli, and to have married Joseph, the son of Heli.

Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." Micah v. 2.

At the time when Christ was born "there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem," to inquire about him. The place from which these wise men came is supposed to have been Persia, because that lay east of Judæa. Here they saw a wonderful star shining in the heavens, and it appeared to them to be exactly over the land of Judæa. They, therefore, thought that something extraordinary had happened there; and it is supposed that they now remembered a prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the East—which prophecy might have been handed down to them—"There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Numb. xxiv. 17.

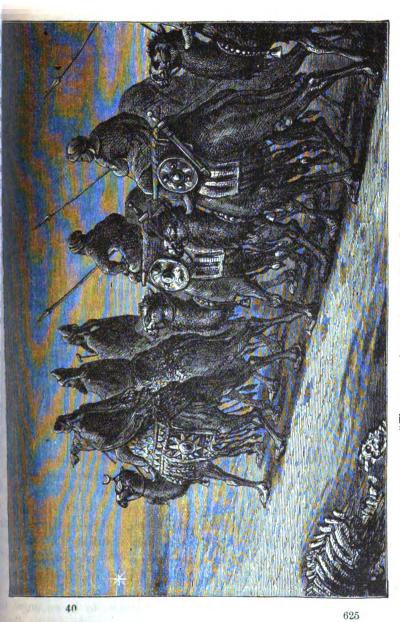
Herod the Great—as he was called—then reigned over the Jews; and when the wise men inquired after this new king, and the news came to the ears of Herod, he was "troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Herod was troubled for fear that he should lose his crown; and all Jerusalem was troubled lest there should be a civil war about who should have it, Christ or Herod. Now Christ came not to be the king of the Jews, as Herod was, but to be a spiritual king—to reign, not over territories, but over hearts; and to conquer, not the surrounding nations, but to overcome sin, death, and the powers of hell.

But Herod did not understand this, and he therefore very craftily set about, if possible, to destroy Jesus. And first he inquired of the chief priests and scribes, where Christ was likely to be born; and they referred him to the prophecy of Micah, and told him—at Bethlehem of Judæa. So Herod sent for the wise men, and informed them that he had found out the place after which they inquired, and he wished them to go and see the new king; and when they had found him they were to let him know, that he might worship him; but his real design was, not to worship Jesus, but to kill him.\*

Having received Herod's commands, the wise men took their leave, and set off for Bethlehem, which was only six miles from Jerusalem.

<sup>\*</sup> The exact date of the birth of Christ has occasioned much dispute. Dionysius Exiguus, a Syrian monk of great learning in the sixth century, published as the result of his researches, the opinion that Christ was born 753 years after the founding of Rome—or as you will sometimes see in the books, A. U. C.—Anno Urbe Condita—753. As no one could then prove to the contrary, that year was after a time generally adopted by the nations of Europe as the year 1 of the Christian era. But within the last two hundred years, Biblical scholars have discovered by comparing the death of Herod, the date of which is known absolutely, and the date when certain Roman governors ruled in Judæa, that the date of Dionysius was several years too late. It is now generally believed that Christ was born in 749 A. U. C., or four years before our era, though Lewin and some others say it was six years.





"There came wise men from the East to Jerusalem."

When the wise men departed, the star directed them to the house, where "they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and they fell down, and worshipped him." Then, according to the custom in that part of the world,



when great persons were approached, and especially kings, they "opened their treasures, and presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," the frankincense and myrrh both being valuable gums from Arabia, and other parts of the East.

The wise men having seen Jesus, and left this suitable supply to his parents, who, though descended from King David, were but poor, departed for their own homes. Their nearest way was that which they took, and so they had no need to return to Jerusalem, as Herod desired them to do; but the grand reason why they did not was because God warned them, in a dream, not to return to Herod.

God then spoke to Joseph by an angel in a dream, and ordered him to leave Bethlehem

directly, with the infant Jesus and his mother, and go into Egypt, which was not far from Judea, and was out of Herod's dominions, and there to remain till he should receive a like command to return, for Herod would seek to kill the child. So Joseph got up directly, and escaped by night into Egypt, where he, Mary, and the infant, remained till the death of Herod.

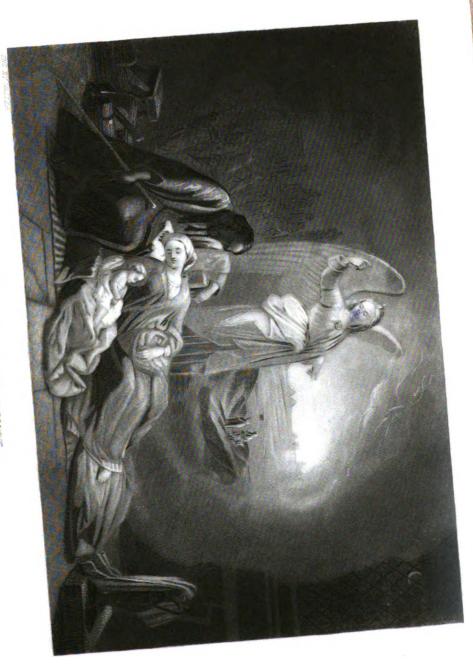
When Herod found that the wise men did not return, he was in a great rage; and supposing that Jesus was at Bethlehem, he was resolved yet to carry his wicked design against him into effect. He could not, indeed, learn which was the infant he wanted; but to make sure of his mark, he ordered some of his officers to go to Bethlehem, and kill all the children that were two years old and under, thinking that by killing the children of that age he should be sure to kill the new king. The wicked king Herod was so cruel that history tells us he even slew three of his own sons; no wonder he had a heart so hard as to kill the little infants in Bethlehem.

When Herod was dead, Joseph was again spoken to by an angel in a dream; and being ordered to return, he left Egypt and went to live at Nazareth.



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# Account of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Jesus Christ.

#### MATTHEW III.

ANOTHER testimony to Jesus being the Messiah is stated by St. Matthew. It is that the Messiah was to have a forerunner; or, as great men used to have footmen or heralds going before them to clear the way for them, so Jesus was to be announced to the world by a prophet. And "in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea." This was "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" which the prophet Isaiah foretold in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy.

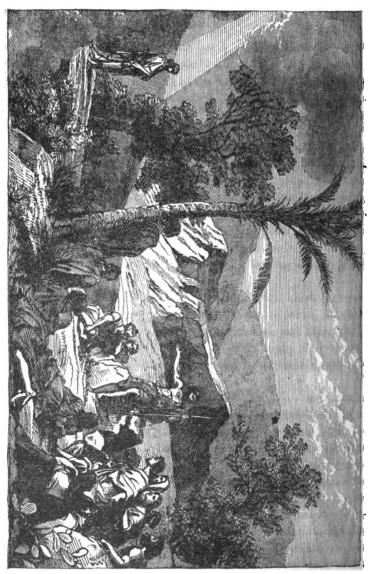
John the Baptist—the name by which he is distinguished from John the Evangelist—was a priest of the order of Aaron, though we do not find that he ever ministered in the temple; but we shall have occasion to notice more about him as we proceed through the four Gospels.

The subject on which John the Baptist preached was repentance; the theme of his discourses was—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The dress of John the Baptist appears to have been singular enough; but it was the dress in which the prophets usually appeared—perhaps a camel's skin with the hair on it, or a garment of hair, which was very rough; for in such plain robes the prophets used to dress. John's meat was also as singular as his dress, for he lived chiefly on "locusts and wild honey."

It appears that John by his preaching attracted great crowds. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan;" not that every person in Jerusalem and Judea, and round about them, heard him at the same time, nor that every person heard him at all,—but Matthew means that the crowds were great from all parts of Jerusalem and Judea, and they were of all sorts, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Pharisees and publicans. To these he spoke in bold language, and warned them to fice from the wrath to come! And he told them not to boast about Abraham being their father,—that is, not to boast that they were Jews descended from Abraham; but to bring forth good fruit, that is, good works, as a good tree brings forth good fruit; and so, if they wished to be thought the children of pious Abraham, they must be pious like Abraham.





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Our Lord Jesus from his childhood till now, when he was almost thirty years of age, had lain hid in Galilee.

"It is supposed that John the Baptist began to preach and baptize about six months before Christ appeared." Prior to his entering on his ministry, Christ came to John to be baptized of him; and John baptized him, though he felt reluctant to do it, and thought it too great an honor when Christ went to him for that purpose. After this was done, John saw the heavens opened, as it were; the sky looked all clear, and bright, and glorious, to his eyes, and the sweet influences of divine grace were coming gently and yet strikingly upon Jesus, "like a dove"—that is, in some form of light resembling the appearance of a dove, and mild as a dove,—or as a dove descends, and hovers, and lights.

John also heard a voice speaking from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus was Jesus declared to be the Son of God.

In this chapter you read of "the Pharisees and Sadducees;" their names will often occur in these Gospels. We will next tell you who they were.

The "Pharisees" were a sect or set of men among the Jews, who professed to observe the law of God more than any others; they made a great show of their religion outwardly, and took care that everybody should take notice of them when they prayed, or did any religious



CHRIST DISPUTING IN THE TEMPLE

service. They contrived, by these means, to gain the favor of the multitude, and their influence was at last so great that they filled many of the best offices. They taught that men could merit heaven, without a Saviour.

The "Sadducees" were a sort of infidels. They believed that the sout died when the body was dead, and denied that the body would rise again. As they believed there was neither reward nor punishment in another world, they did not leave sinners to humble themselves before God, or to receive their deserts from him, but punished offenders against the law in the severest manner. While the Pharisees believed in traditions, these people believed only in the written law of Moses.

## The Temptation of Jesus Christ.

#### MATTHEW IV.

FESUS, after his baptism, withdrew into the wilderness, for a period of fasting and prayer, before entering upon his work as a divine teacher. It is generally believed that the place where he went was what is now known as Mount Quarantania, northwest of Jericho, a very wild and forbidding region, inhabited only by wild beasts. Here, at the end of his forty days of fasting, Satan, who was not quite certain that he was really God manifest in the flesh, assailed him with his sharpest temptations. It is probable that two at least, and perhaps all the three of these temptations were visions, in which the tempter assumed a bodily form; but in the weakened condition of the body of Jesus, after this long fast, these visions might be the most trying of temptations. The first was an appeal to his creative power to furnish himself with food, for he was exceedingly hungry. The tempter suggested: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It was in a desert region not far from this that God had provided by a miracle that bread from heaven—the manna—which had fed Israel; and if he was really the Son of God, why should he not repeat the miracle in another form? Jesus could have turned the stones into bread if he would, for he afterwards turned water into wine; but he was not willing to lower his divine dignity at the suggestion of the tempter, and he said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." By this he meant, that God's word told us to rely upon him to find us bread when we wanted it, and that those who trusted in him need not require the power of working miracles to produce bread from stones, but only let them trust in God, and he would provide for them. The passage which our Lord quoted you will find in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and in the third verse.

Satan then carried Jesus in vision to the pinnacle, or the top of the temple in Jerusalem, which was not far off. While he was here, standing over the holy city of Jerusalem, Satan proposed to him to cast himself down; and then further suggested that it was written in the word of God, "He shall give his angels charge over thee," so that he could try by this whether what God's word said was true. Jesus directly replied, with an answer from Scripture, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." To tempt is to try, or put to the test; and we are never to run into

danger to see if God can bring us out of it. The above words are quoted from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the sixteenth verse.

Christ was still assailed by Satan, who carried him in vision to a very high mountain, which commanded a view of the surrounding countries, and, while viewing their extent, he showed Him "all the kingdoms of the



JERUSALEM, WITH TEMPLE IN THE DISTANCE,

world," and presented to His mind their vast dominion, if He would only serve him. Perhaps his suggestion was something like this: that with his mighty power he should have all the idolatrous world immediately for his subjects, if he would conform to their customs, and justify their rites, and give honor to their false gods. Here Jesus both baffled and drove the tempter away; for he said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Here, finally, our Lord referred to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the thirteenth verse.

Thus this vile enemy was driven away, and offered no more suggestions, for he saw that he could make no impression upon the mind of Christ, as he too often does upon our minds, when we think and do what is evil.

After this Jesus was comforted and fed by angels.

Jesus commenced preaching soon after this, and a few months later John was cast into prison. The early labors of the Saviour were in Capernaum and its vicinity, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, a few miles from Nazareth; and thus a prophecy was accomplished about his appearing there to give the light of knowledge to the darkened understandings of men.

Now it was that Jesus began to choose some disciples who should attend

him on his journeys, learn his doctrines, and see the wonderful things he would do, so that they might bear witness about them after he had left the world.

Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw Peter and his brother Andrew, fishing; and so—for the reason just named—he bade these fishermen follow him, for he would make them "fishers of men;" meaning, that they should no more catch fish, but he would employ them to bring sinners to be saved by him. Soon after, he saw James and John, who were fishermen also, and were in a ship, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called to them in the same way, and they also followed him.

Jesus now proceeded in preaching; and, in addition to this, he worked miracles, or did many things beyond the reach of natural means to do; and so St. Matthew gives us yet another evidence that he was the Messiah—the Anointed Saviour.

## Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

## MATTHEW V., VI., VII.

WE now come to what is called our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount. It contains the beatitudes, or declarations of blessings made by Jesus. His first words are—"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." By these he means all humble souls who feel their need of a Saviour, as a truly poor man feels his need of charity. While many a proud rich man, and many a proud poor man too, shall be shut out of heaven, such a humble poor soul shall have a rich portion there.

Then he proceeds: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;" that is, they that are sorry for their sins, and grieve that they have offended against a good God, shall be pardoned for Jesus Christ's sake.—
"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" angry persons, full of resentment at every affront, can never enjoy any comfort of life; but meek spirits, having the temper of Christ, really inherit all the good that is around them, and enjoy it for themselves.—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled;" those who find themselves guilty before God, and with a desire strong as a hungry man has for meat, or a thirsty man for drink, look for acceptance with God through a better righteousness—or better merits than their own—shall be satisfied with the righteousness of the Saviour.—"Blessed are the merciful:

for they shall obtain mercy," those who show mercy and kindness towards the bodies and souls of their fellow-creatures, for Jesus Christ's sake, shall receive mercy from him.—"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;" and none else shall see him in glory, but those whose hearts or dispositions are made clean and new by the Divine Spirit.—"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Those who do all they can to make men live quietly and harmlessly, like real Christians, and to stop strife whenever they see it, God will bless, and they shall be owned as his children, who so strikingly bear one of the marks of his

image; so you see that those who love to quarrel have no right to look for the Saviour's blessing.—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" this means, that those who are ill-treated by wicked people, because they are religious, shall be rewarded at last with the blessings of glory, which their persecutors, except they repent, can never enjoy.—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Those who are called illnatured names, or names intended to reproach them, because they serve God in sincerity, shall be blessed too.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad," if this is the case, "for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets;" and, if they did so to the holy prophets, you must expect that they will not spare you.

Our Divine Teacher then goes on to show what he expects from those, who are his disciples.

He removes every ground of mistake about his doctrine, and shows the people that his disciples must reverence the holy law of God, and the truths taught by the prophets, and have a better righteousness or holiness than the Scribes and Pharisees, who were men that made only an outside show of religion, while, in their hearts, they did not love the law of God.

To help you better to understand our Lord's discourse, I must just notice these two classes.

The one class of persons is called "Scribes." They wrote copies of the Scriptures long before printing was known in the world, and whatever they heard of traditions, or things in the Jewish history which God's word did not record; they also read and explained the Scriptures to the people, giving their own fancied meaning to them, while the people listened to their comments with great reverence. Many of these Scribes were Pharisees, and so our Lord often couples them together.

The other class of persons is called publicans. By publican we understand a person who keeps an inn; but these publicans were not inn-keepers, but tax-gatherers employed by the Romans to collect taxes of the Jews, who were then subject to Rome. They were not liked by the Jews, and, in gathering the taxes, very often cheated the people, dealt hardly with them, and took more from them than they ought, for the purpose of putting the money into their own pockets.

In continuing his sermon, our Lord warns against making a show of our charity, and also against making a show of prayer.

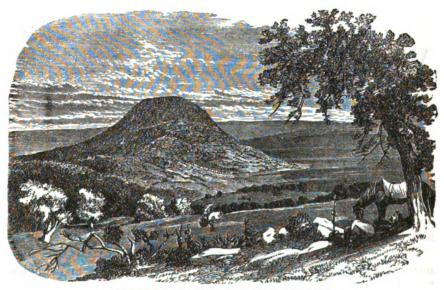
And here our Lord tells us what kind of petitions are to be offered, in what we call "The Lord's Prayer," which, as you probably know, we wish you well to understand. Here you address God as your Father; for, as a father, he provides for you; you look to him in heaven, the holy dwelling of his glory; you express a desire that his name may be treated with reverence; you wish that he may reign over your heart, and over the hearts of others everywhere, and that his holy law may be done among all mankind; you acknowledge that you live by his bounty, who gives you daily bread; you confess your sins, which are debts to God, because they have left you short in paying God the duties you owe to him, and you ask him graciously to pardon them, as you pardon those who offend you-which we hope you do; you ask God to preserve you from doing sinful things, which is meant by "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or from the evil one, who is Satan; and you express your full belief that God can do all that you ask, and your desire to give him honor and praise, by ending the prayer with saying, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Other warnings given by our Lord are against being covetous. Jesus Christ tells such persons, that, if their treasures consist in fine garments, like those laid up by rich people in the East, the moth will by-and-by eat

them up; or, if in precious metals, they will at last canker; or, in other treasures, they may be robbed of them; and it is, therefore, much wiser to look for a lasting portion of better treasure—the happiness of heaven; the love and favor of God forever is far better than all the riches that ever were got together in this world.

He then goes on to warn against being insincere in religion—against thinking uncharitably of others—against doing harm to anybody—against being deceived by false prophets, that is, false preachers or teachers—and also against deceiving ourselves.

Lastly, our dear Saviour concludes his sermon by a pretty and striking comparison, taken from fishermen in the East, who, to be near the sea at



MOUNT TABOR, IN GALILEE, OFTEN ASCENDED BY CHRIST.

fishing time, build their huts on the sands, when the storms come, and, in a moment, sweep them all away. So, he tells us, will the hopes of all those perish, who are contented with hearing what he taught but never doing it; but those who mind his sayings and do them shall be like a wise man, who built his house on a rock, which floods, rain, and wind, could never sweep away. The house of the wise man fell not, for it was founded upon a rock; the house of the foolish man fell, and great was the fall of it, for it was built upon the sand. Christ himself is as a rock, on which thousands

have safely rested their hopes for eternity; but this world, with all its hopes of pleasure, is but as sand; and those who build upon it for happiness must at last lose everything, and be ruined forever.

Thus Christ ended his divine sermon, and the people were astonished at hearing him. All he said was so wise, pure and good; all he said was so different from what the Scribes and Pharisees had taught. And he still preaches to us in this sermon: he still preaches to us in his holy word. May we learn of him, for he is still, by his Holy Spirit, ready to teach us -he is "meek and lowly of heart, and we shall find rest for our souls."

# Miraculous Cures performed by Jesus Christ.

## MATTHEW VIII. IX.

THEN Jesus came down from the mount, the people did not like to leave him, they were so delighted with what he had said. Crowds followed him wherever he went.

Matthew now tells us about a wonderful cure which Jesus performed. A poor creature afflicted with leprosy earnestly cried to him for help. If we had seen him our hearts would have felt the greatest pity for him, for the leprosy was a most miserable disease. We think we see him, with his white skin covered all over with scurf, which, had it been taken off, would have shown a body full of raw wounds. Perhaps he could hardly drag along his swollen limbs, with deformed joints, the effect of his horrible disease; and every one stood away from him, lest he should be infected by him. But Jesus, whose "Heart is made of tenderness."

was ready at once to help him; and if others pitied him, and could not

help, Christ both pitied and helped him too. He touched him, and he was cured; his word was enough to remove the disorder-"I will, be thou

clean."

Matthew here tells us of another wonderful cure which he did. A Centurion, or officer in the Roman army, met him in a place called Capernaum, where he was dwelling; and, doubtless, having heard of his fame and readiness to do good, he humbly asked him to cure his servant. "Lord," said the officer, "my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." It is not quite certain that Matthew meant by the palsy, in this chapter, the disease which we call by that name; for the names

of diseases, and the diseases themselves, change, from age to age; but the disease was, at all events, very distressing and generally considered incurable; but Christ could cure it as well as he did the leprosy; so he said, "I will come and heal him." The officer thought it was too great an honor for Christ to visit him, and again humbly asked him only to command the disease to go, and it would obey him, as readily as his soldiers did when he gave them the word of command. This was great faith in his power, to believe that he could cure the man, though the man was not there. But he knew that Christ could see the man, though the man could not see him; and, as Christ delights in those who fully trust in him, he praised the man's faith to his disciples, to teach them to trust him with the same confidence; and he

told the Centurion to go home, and he would find his servant well; and so he was, for he "was healed in the self-same hour."

The next account of Christ's curing the sick informs us, that the mother of Peter's wife was "sick of a fever"—a disorder that is often very severe and killing, and, if cured, it is not to be cured in a moment. But Jesus only touched her hand, and the fever left her.

At that time Satan and his wicked spirits tormented the



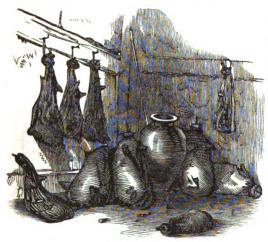
ROMAN CENTURION.

bodies of some persons in a surprising way, as though they would prevent Christ from gaining honor by curing these victims. But these were nothing before him, for "he cast out the devils with his word."

Perhaps you have seen the sea, and how rough are its waves. If you ever saw it in a storm, it foams most furiously, and its waves swell like high mountains. It dashes against the rocks as if it would even crush them to pieces. When this is the case the winds blow with a force that scarcely anything can resist. In such a storm the disciples were when Christ was with them in a ship, crossing the sea of Tiberias into the country of Gadara. While they were all in alarm, and "the ship was covered with waves," he was in a sweet sleep. The disciples, whose faith in his divine power was now fully strengthened, having seen what wonderful things he did, imme-

diately awoke him, and cried, "Lord, save us, we perish!" His tender heart felt pity for their distress, and he instantly commanded the winds and the waves to be still, "and there was a great calm." Well might they wonder and say, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

The next instance of our Lord's power is the cure of two men possessed of devils. These men lived in caves of the rocks, where the Jewish people used to make their tombs to bury their dead, and they were so "exceeding fierce" that "no man might pass by that way." The wicked spirits that were in these unhappy bodies were in a still greater rage when they saw Christ approaching them, and they said, "What have we to do with thee,



WINE SKINS.

Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?" From which question it is believed that wicked spirits will be more tormented after the day of judgment than they ever yet have been. Since these devils found that Christ would not let them keep possession of the bodies of these poor men whom they tormented, they asked to go into a herd of swine that they saw near them-for they would rather torment these poor animals

than be prevented from doing any harm at all. Now, as these swine belonged to Jews, and were kept contrary to God's law, who would not allow them to partake of them, being reckoned among the unclean beasts, Jesus, to punish their owners, suffered the devils to go into the swine, which they so tormented that they "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and so perished in the waters."

The covetous Jews were very angry that they had lost their swine, though two of their people had been saved from cruel torments by the loss, and having besought Jesus to leave them, he went home again to Capernaum.

Jesus, having returned to Capernaum, another man, "sick of the palsy," was brought to him on his bed, or mattress, which, in the Eastern countries,

is very light and thin. Our Lord, seeing that the man himself, and his friends, believed in his willingness and power to cure him, instantly gave him relief, both in soul and body-he pardoned his sins, and he sent him home, carrying the bed on which he was brought. Some of the wicked Scribes who were present, when they heard Christ tell the man that his sins were forgiven him, charged him with blasphemy, because none but God could forgive sins, and they knew not that he was "God manifest," or seen, "in the flesh." But they must have been ashamed of themselves, and put to silence when our Lord afterwards cured the man; for as none but God could forgive sins, so none but God could say with effect to one sick of the palsy, "Arise and walk."

At this time Matthew was called to be one of Christ's disciples; Luke calls him Levi, for the Jews often had two names. He was sitting taking taxes at "the receipt of custom," or a custom-house, where duties on goods are paid to the king, when Jesus said to him, "Follow me. And he arose and followed him." So, when his grace touches the heart, sinners now leave all

their wicked connections, and are ready to give up all their worldly gains, if they stand in their way, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, by openly professing him, and declaring in their lives whose they are, and whom they serve.



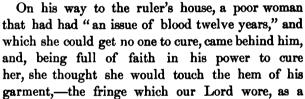
LEATHER BOTTLES.

We next find Jesus at a feast given by Matthew to his friends, as appears from the fifth chapter of Luke. Perhaps he wished to do them good on this occasion, and wanted them to hear what his Lord would say. His companions were publicans, or tax-gatherers, a set of men greatly despised, because they pressed people so hard to get all the money they could from them. The proud Pharisees, who thought themselves the best of men, were astonished that Christ, who taught the people to be holy, should sit down with such company. But our Lord did not go there to countenance any wickedness, but with the design to teach them the way to be saved.

The seventeenth verse of this chapter refers to a custom not known in America, and for that reason some have not understood it. Our Lord says, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." He said this to signify that his disciples—being men taken from active business, and not accustomed to fast, as were the disciples of John-were not fit to bear the severity of it, any more than an old bottle could bear new wine; and, in a verse preceding—than an old rotten garment would bear mending with a strong new piece. Now we can see why an old garment must not be mended with a strong new piece of cloth, because the new piece would tear away the rotten part, by its strength and weight; but how can new wine hurt old bottles? An old American bottle is as good as a new one, and perhaps, indeed, better, because it is seasoned,—has been tried and found good. But the bottles used in the East were made of the skins of goats or kids, which were taken off whole and dressed; all the legs but one and the neck being tied up, were used till the leather became tender and easily rent by strong pressure.

A certain ruler of the synagogue, where the Jews worshipped, had a daughter lying dead; and, having heard of the wonderful things which Jesus did, he believed that he was able to restore his daughter, even from

death itself, and so went and worshipped him, and asked him for his almighty aid. Jesus arose from Matthew's table, where he was then sitting, and, following the ruler, went with him to his house.





FILLING A BOTTLE.

Jew,—and even that garment, hanging about his sacred person, might be the channel of conveying the healing virtue which he possessed to her poor diseased body. Jesus knew all about what she was doing, and why she did it, and he graciously turned round to her and said, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." He, indeed, had made her whole; but by her believing in his power to heal her she had received the cure.

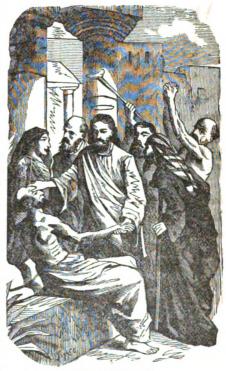
Jesus then went to the ruler's house, and when he came there he "saw the minstrels and the people making a noise." This was a proof that his daughter was really dead; for the minstrels were pipers who played mournful tunes, and the noise was such as was made by mourning women, who were always employed among the Jews to groan and cry over deceased persons. So he stopped their playing and mourning, and told them that the little maiden was not dead, but only slept;—for she was not dead to

him, since he could at once restore her; but, as they had seen that she was dead, they laughed at him for saying the contrary. However, he soon gave proof that death to him was no more than a sleep; and though no merely human being could awake the dead, he could. And, going in, he took her

by the hand, and she rose up: and the fame of this cure went abroad everywhere.

When he left the ruler's house two blind men followed him, and they cried, "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us." These men believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, or anointed Saviour,—and, as he was to be of the family of David, they addressed Christ, "Thou Son of David." He let them follow him into the house, and then he asked if they really believed he could cure them. And they said, "Yea, Lord;" and, having merely touched their eyes, they received sight.

The blind men had hardly left the house when the people brought Jesus "a dumb man, possessed with a devil." It is thought that the wicked spirit had taken away his power of speech. "And when the devil was cast out the dumb spake:



HEALING THE BLIND.

and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel." Moses, Elijah and Elisha were great prophets, and did wonderful things,—but so many such things, and done in so wonderful a way, were never before known in Israel. And these same multitudes were doubtless greatly influenced to regard Christ as being sent from God, and as being all he claimed for himself; but were so rigidly held by the power of the synagogue, and the Jewish priesthood, that they hesitated, and even feared, to harbor such conviction—much more, to give utterance to it, in a way that would be likely to reach the ears of those in authority. Only the careful Bible student can properly estimate the force of this.

## Christ's Twelve Disciples.

#### MATTHEW X.

E have here a list of the twelve apostles, which, for the sake of memory, we put down in three columns, and divide into three fours:

- 1. Simon, called Peter.
- 2. Andrew, his brother.
- 3. James, Son of Zebedee.
- 4. John, his brother.
- 5. Philip.
- 6. Bartholomew.
- 7. Thomas.
- 8. Matthew.

- 9. James, Son of Alpheus,
- 10. Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddens.
- 11. Simon, the Canaanite.
- 12. Judas Iscariot.

Of these, the first two, Simon Peter and Andrew, were brothers. The next two were also brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and John.

The last among the next four was Matthew, the writer of this gospel; and the last of the last four was Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his divine Master.

In the first verse these are called disciples, which means persons who learn of a teacher; for Christ was their teacher, and they learned from him. In the second verse they are called apostles, which means persons who are sent. These twelve were chosen as Christ's disciples, that they might be always with him, and see the wonderful things which he did, and hear the divine doctrines which he taught; and afterwards they went forth as apostles to tell the world what they had heard and seen, and so to deliver his message as servants whom he had sent.

# Christ's Character of John the Baptist.

## MATTHEW XI.

JOHN THE BAPTIST was at this time cast into prison. The cause of his imprisonment is given in the fourteenth chapter. The wonderful things which Jesus did were, however, told him in that place, and as he desired that his disciples should become acquainted with Christ, he sent them to hear from his own lips what proofs he could give that he was the long-hoped-for Messiah. Jesus both told and showed them what wonderful things he performed on the blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf, the dead; and how he preached the glad tidings of heavenly mercy to the poor. These were proofs enough.

Then as soon as John's disciples were gone, he took occasion to show the

sharacter of this good man, on whose faithful ministry many of the people had attended. "What," said he, "went ye out into the wilderness to see?" when ye went to hear John the Baptist. "A reed shaken by the wind?" They understood the meaning of his question, which was, that John the Baptist was not a timid, wavering preacher, weak and shaking like a reed—but they had had the benefit of the boldest warnings from his lips.

"But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?"

Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses." If they had gone to see such an one when they went to see John the Baptist, they had found themselves mistaken, for he was quite a plain man, who was not concerned to make a show of himself in the world, but to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Christ.

Yet again he asked, "But what went ye out for to see? a prophet?" If this had been their expectation, they had been even more highly privileged than those who had heard the prophets, for, in hearing John the Baptist, they



DANCING IN THE EAST.

had heard more than a prophet, a person more excellent than a prophet—r his "messenger"—one whom God had sent to be the forerunner of his own Son when he came into the world to preach glad tidings to the lost.

They had indeed heard the greatest man that ever was born; for he was prophesied of by the prophets, and pointed to the very object himself before the people which the prophets had never seen, but were only honored to foretell.

Thus you see that true greatness does not consist of riches, or shortalents, but it consists in our being servants of Christ; and he who is most faithful of his servants, and is honored with divine intercours him, is raised to the most exalted rank. Indeed, though John the Briwas so great a man, Jesus said even of him, "Notwithstanding, he is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The little interheaven is greater than John was, for he was then exposed to the faults belong to the best of men, while the infant that is in heaven is free free sin, and forever near and like his glorious Creator.

# The Pharisees' Enmity against Christ.

## MATTHEW XII.

NE Sabbath-day Jesus was going through a corn-field in his way: synagogue, and his disciples who were with him, being hu plucked some ears of corn, and ate them. Now the Pharisees, though were wicked in their hearts, were very particular about some outward to wishing people to think them the most pious men in the world. So found fault with Jesus for letting his disciples pluck the com of Sabbath, which they considered as a sort of work, forbidden by the commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it is in it thou shalt not do any work." (See the twentieth chapter of Ex Jesus, who was always full of wisdom, gave them a prompt reply, to they could not make any answer, for he reminded them how David at shew-bread when he was hungry, and that bread God had commanded given only to the priests, yet the priest gave it to David and his men. also told them to recollect that the priests did work on the Sabbath-day that within the temple too, for they could not kill and sacrifice the without doing work, and yet they were not doing wrong. them, and he went to the synagogue.

When he arrived at the synagogue they resolved on renewing their supon him: and as there was a man there with a withered hand, they a him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day. This they did "that might accuse him," for they even taught that no medicine was to be gon the Sabbath. Our Lord asked them whether it was not lawful to so sheep on the Sabbath-day, when it had fallen into a pit; and, if a sheep, not a man, who was of so much more value than a beast? "Where

he, "it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days." We may not only ship God on that day, but we may relieve the poor, visit the sick, and other works of kindness and charity. This Christ has taught us by ing the sick, for he said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand: and he ched it forth; and it was restored whole like as the other."

s breaking of the Sabbath was a crime punished by death (see the ty-fifth chapter of Exodus), the Pharisees, instead of being thankful for

good done to the man, tht to destroy Christ for ng him, declaring that he broken the Sabbath. Oh. far will men go in wickass when their hearts are lened! How blind the risees must have been not ave seen that none could e done such a cure but God. y his power! Jesus, howr, went away from them, multitudes followed him, o, hearing what he had ie, took their sick with m, "and he healed them That was, indeed, a



ANCIENT JEWISH SCRIBES.

opy Sabbath to all these poor creatures; they would remember it as long they lived. However, "he charged them that they should not make him own." He did this, perhaps, for two reasons: the one to prevent the arisees having any more proofs of who he was, since they had already used to believe in him from what they had seen; and the other to teach that when we do good we ought not to publish it abroad in every place the Pharisees, who did all their works "to be seen of men."

Among those our Lord healed was "one possessed with a devil, blind d dumb." This cure, more than all the rest, quite astonished the people, d they said that Christ was certainly "the Son of David," meaning the essiah, for he was to spring from David, and so Christ was his son. The harisees heard of this cure, but they said Christ did it by the aid of the lse God Beelzebub, whom they styled "the prince of devils." Now, the evil does much evil, but never any good, and it was the height of malice

to accuse Christ of doing that by the power of the devil which every one, whose heart was not obstinately set against him, must have seen was done by the power of God. This was so wicked that our Lord passes sentence against these hardened men, and since they sinned against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of God—in saying that the devil did what none but the Almighty could do, he declared that such could have no pardon.

Some Scribes and Pharisees having now surrounded him, asked him to give them some other signs, besides those which he had given, before they



ANCIENT ROMAN SCRIBE.

would believe in him. Christ would not gratify their vain curiosity, but he tells them that they shall have one sign more, and that as Jonas, or Jonah, was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. By this he meant his resurrection from the dead—the greatest proof that he was the Messiah. Then, as he was speaking of Jonah, he told them that they, the Pharisees, were so obsti-

nate and wicked that even the men of Nineveh would rise up against them as witnesses in the day of judgment, and condemn them, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah, while they, the Pharisees, remained impenitent, though a greater than Jonas was there. Jonah is the Hebrew name of that prophet, but Jonas the name he bore among the Greeks.

Parables.—The Sower: The Tares: The Mustard-seed: The Leaven: The Hidden Treasure: The Pearl: The Net.

MATTHEW XIII.

WE now come to our Lord's parables; and they are very interesting indeed, as well as instructive. But do you know what a parable means? It is a sort of fable, and, by feigned stories, teaches us true things.

Parable sometimes has other meanings in Scripture, but this is the meaning of our Lord's parables. You have perhaps been amused with Æsop's or Gay's fables, and they teach us many good lessons about how we should conduct ourselves in going through the world; but our Lord's parables teach us how we may find a better world. The finest fables are comparatively nonsense by the side of Christ's parables. They are so simple, so natural, so tender, so beautiful—and yet some of them are so grand.

The first parable in this chapter is that called "the Sower."

Our Lord explains this parable. The Sower was himself, and it may also mean every minister of his gospel; the seed which he sows when he preaches

is the best of seed—God's word. The ground on which he sows is the heart. Now, when he sows, sometimes "the wicked one" comes and takes away the seed; and when we do not pay attention, we let the devil get into our minds, and, like the little birds with the seed, he carries away from us all the good we might get. At other times we hear the word with great pleasure; but if any wicked persons find fault with us that we are too religious, then we are in danger of minding what they say, and of thinking too lightly of the joy we felt when we heard



THE SOWER

the gracious truths of the blessed gospel; and so we are like the stony-ground hearers, for the seed withers in our hearts, instead of taking root. At other times we let bad, foolish and vain thoughts enter into our minds while we are hearing, and these become so numerous that there is not room for anything better to enter. Then it is that the word in our hearts resembles the seed sown among thorns. But if we hear the word, if we understand it, and if we bring forth fruit, and are holy in our thoughts and lives, then the good seed takes root, and we show that we have not received it in vain.

The next parable is "The Wheat and Tares." You may result from the twenty-fourth to thirtieth verses.

You will often find our Lord using the expression, the most most mean by it the state of bless down ich all that are made holy go when they die. That, too, is the which we may call the kingdom of heaven above; but the state of bless down ich all that are made holy go when they die.

Digitized by GOOSIC

of heaven below. All that hear the gospel are within the boundaries of this kingdom. Christ, in his gospel, asks them to become his subjects; and



those who submit to his laws in this kingdom below are prepared for the kingdom above. There are, however, many that do not submit to them; these are mixed with those that do, and are like bad seed among the good. Well, they must both grow together now, but they will not always grow together. The day of judgment is coming, and that will be the harvest. Then the wicked will be burned, and the good will be laid up like precious wheat, as treasure in a storehouse.

We have then a short parable of "The Treasure." In the kingdom of heaven there is a rich treasure. The gospel is the field where it is to be found. Here are "durable riches."

We have another parable of "The Merchantman." He was trying to find out some goodly pearls, that he might gain by them; and at last he met with one, and parted with everything he had that he might get it for himself.

"My heart exulting sings,
For I this precious pearl have found."

"Jesus Christ," says Mr. Henry, "is a pearl of great price, a jewel of inestimable value, which will make those that have it rich, truly rich, towards God: in having him, we have enough to make us happy here, and forever."

The periods of "The Net" follows next. After explaining the wheat

The Frances "The Householder." "Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Ridg tom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringerly which the treasure things new and old." The teachers among the treasure Scribes. Our Lord, therefore, was now bringing up his discount to teachers, and he meant by this that if they were good



teachers, they would be like a good householder, who had both old and new things to set at his table.

We are told, at the close of this chapter, that people were everywhere astonished at Christ's wisdom; especially were they surprised who heard him speak where he was brought up. His reputed father was a carpenter; and they said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" But the knowledge of Christ was that of the Son of God. Yet, because he did not take the form of a rich man, but "for our sakes became poor," the silly people thought it strange that he should know so much, and be able to teach the way to heaven even better than the learned Scribes. "And they were offended in him." They did not like to be taught by him, and so, as they despised his teaching, "he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

## The Martyrdom of John the Baptist.—Christ feeds the Multitude.— Christ walks on the Sea.

#### MATTHEW XIV.

THE first thing that is related in this chapter is the martyrdom of John the Baptist. He was killed by Herod the Tetrarch. This was not the Herod who killed the infants of Bethlehem, but one of his sons. *That* Herod was called Herod the Great, but *this* was called Herod Antipas. When his father died he divided the kingdom into four parts among his four sons, and this son had Galilee, of which he was tetrarch, that word signifying that he had a *fourth part* of the government.

This Herod, like his father, was a bad man. His brother Philip having lost his power and retired into private life, Herod lured away his wife Herodias, who, being a wicked woman, was easily induced to leave Philip, and married Herod. John the Baptist had boldly reproved him for this crime, and he cast John directly into prison, and, indeed, would have killed him at once: but as John was esteemed by the people as a great prophet, he feared that they might rise and rebel, and so he contented himself with confining him.

At last his death was determined. Herod kept his birth-day with all the splendor of a prince, and there was a merry dance. Among the rest, "the daughter of Herodias was there." She, too, had deserted her unfortunate father. We are not then surprised that she could be guilty of the cruelty she afterwards displayed, for she seems to have been an apt scholar in

following the wicked example of her mother. This young creature danced before the court, and Herod was so much delighted that, to show his satisfaction, he declared, with an oath, that she should have anything she asked, even to the half of his kingdom: not that he would have given half his kingdom away, but this was an Eastern method of speaking, which allowed the person to whom it was addressed to ask a very great favor. You remember that Ahasuerus made the same promise to Esther. Esther, however, saved many lives by her request; but this wretched young creature asked for the life of one of the most excellent of men: she asked for the



PRISON IN WHICH JOHN WAS BEHEADED.

head of John the Baptist. Her mother urged her on to make this request, but she was as wicked as her mother in making it. When we are told to sin, even a parent's commands are not to be obeyed, because God is above our parents, and all sin is an offence against God. It was not, however, enough that she should ask the head of John the Baptist, but she must have it in a charger,

or large dish. This was to satisfy her mother that there was no delay, but that John was actually put to death; and also to prevent Herod changing his mind, that, on more sober reflection, his heart should not shrink back from the murder. The Evangelists say, "the king was sorry; nevertheless, for his oath's sake," he granted the request. Such an oath had better have been broken than kept. The deed was a far more wicked thing than breaking his word. However, he "sent and beheaded John in the prison;" and the young Salome took the head and handed it to her mother, who satisfied her evil eyes with the sight of her faithful reprover's countenance, quiet in death.

And now for a while Herod, Herodias, and Salome were most likely at ease—for conscience often goes to sleep, but only to wake again in a greater fright; but at last it must have been let loose upon them like a roaring lion, when God punished them for their sins. History tells us that when Herod had put away his lawful wife to make room for Herodias, Aretas, king of

Petrea—who was father of the former—made war against Herod, and totally destroyed his army. Moreover, at the instigation of the wicked Herodias, he tried to dethrone his brother Agrippa, who ranked higher than he, bearing the royal title, and not that of Tetrarch. Agrippa, however, outwitted him, and procured his banishment to Lyons, where he and Herodias disgracefully died. Salome is also reported to have come to an awful end, and if she had a moment for thought, she must have remembered her cruelty to John the Baptist; for going over the ice in winter, it is said the ice broke, and she slipped in up to her neck, and her head was cut off by the sharpness of the ice. "Thus," says a great writer, "God required her head for that of John the Baptist, which, if true, was a remarkable providence."

When Jesus heard that John was cruelly put to death, he left the place to avoid Herod, for he had yet many works of mercy to do before he should leave the world. On his departure, multitudes followed him, and "he healed their sick."

Having led them into a desert place, the people were very hungry and

weary, and Jesus felt compassion for them. But there were no less than "five thousand men, besides women and children;" and how were so many to be fed? All that the disciples had were five loaves and two fishes; and what were they among so many? With Jesus nothing was impossible. "He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." You see Jesus would not



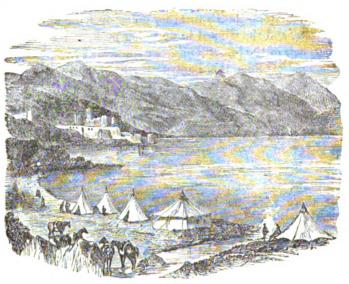
CHRIST AND PETER ON THE WATER.

take a meal without looking up to heaven for a blessing. "And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments twelve basketsful." This was indeed a miracle; and no one could have done this, if he had not had power from on high.

Jesus now dismissed the multitude, and sent his disciples across the sea of Galilee, while he went up into a mountain to pray.

In the midst of this night the ship in which the disciples were sailing

was overtaken with a violent storm, and they were in the greatest danger of going to the bottom. The Jews divided the night into four parts, relieving their guards on the watch-towers every three hours, and so they reckoned time by these watches. "And in the fourth watch of the night," which was between three and six in the morning, Jesus went to the disciples, "walking on the sea"—another proof of his divine power, who could make



SEA OF GALILEE.

the sea, where he pleased to tread, as solid as the earth itself. The disciples were more frightened at the appearance of Christ than at the storm; but Christ spoke kindly to them. And Peter, having asked his leave, went to meet him on the water, for he could make it as firm for Peter as for himself. Peter went a little way, but his faith in Christ's power failed him, and he began to sink; and then he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus caught him by the hand, lifted him up, reproved him for his want of faith, and led him safely to the ship. As soon as they were in the ship the sea was calm. All the passengers and crew saw most plainly that Jesus possessed nothing less than Almighty power, to do what he did, and they then "came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

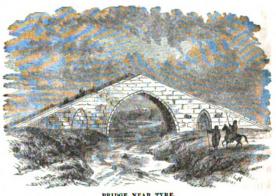
After this they landed in Gennesaret, where Christ performed more miracles.

## Christ Cures the Daughter of the Syro-Phænician Woman, and Feeds the second Multitude.

## MATTHEW XV.

TESUS now left the land of Gennesaret, and went into the coasts or borders of Tyre and Sidon, two principal cities of Phænicia-a renowned country at that time. And a woman of Canaan, or Phenicia—for

both names meant the same -met him. You have probably often heard her called the Syro-Phœnician woman, a name given to persons in that part, because Phœnicia bordered on Syria, and indeed it had formerly been a part of it by conquest. woman, it seems, had heard of the fame of Jesus, and she believed, very strongly,



that he could help her out of the greatest distress.

She had a daughter grievously tormented by a violent disorder, resembling madness, and the evil spirit ruled over her troubled mind and body. The instant she saw Jesus, she cried earnestly to him to have mercy on her, and cure her daughter; and she called him "Lord," showing her faith in his divine power, and "Thou Son of David," owning him as the Messiah, the anointed great deliverer who was to save from sin. Jesus, however, did not notice her; but he knew how great was her faith, and he wished to show it to his disciples. Still she cried out, and still he was silent. disciples then entreated him to grant her request, and send her away. he said he was only sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," meaning that he intended to confine his own ministry to the Jews, and not then to have anything to say to the Gentiles—the people who were not Jews.

The woman was not, however, to be silenced; "she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me!" This was a very short prayer, but it was a very fit one, and a very earnest one; and if you do but offer up this prayer from your heart, it must and will succeed, and the Lord will help you.

Jesus said, "It is not meet" or proper, "to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs." By the *children* he meant the Jews, the only nation that maintained amongst them any of the pure worship of God their heavenly Father; by the *bread* he meant the word of truth and life which he preached, and which was bread to the believing soul; and by dogs, the



BAKER AT THE OVEN.

Gentiles, for so they were esteemed by the Jews, being so unclean in their worship and practices. The woman knew what he meant, for in this way the Jews spoke of the Gentiles, and as she lived near them, she knew their way of speaking.

Well, she would not take any denial. She knew that Christ could help her, and she still pleaded with him. "Truth, Lord," said she, "yet the

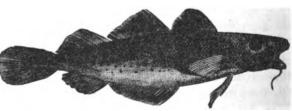
dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." As if she had said, I own all this, I am a Gentile, and thy favors belong to the Jews; I am no better than a dog, for I feel that I am a vile creature before thee who knowest the heart—a miserable sinner—yet as dogs may pick up the crumbs, though they may not sit at their master's table, so in mercy grant me the smallest favor, and I shall be happy.

Christ had now fully shown her faith—he commended it—he granted her request, and he cured her daughter.

This story teaches us to be earnest and persevering in prayer, and,

though ever so vile, a gracious Saviour will at last have mercy on us.

From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus went to the sea of Galilee—to the parts near it; and there, upon a moun-



COMMON FISH OF PALESTINE.

tain, he was visited by "great multitudes," and he cured numbers in all sorts of disorders. There were at this time four thousand men with him, "besides women and children." After being on the mountain for three days, and using the little provision they might have with them, they needed some refreshment; and here again Jesus performed a great miracle, and

multiplied seven loaves, and a few little fishes, so that "they did all eat and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets-full."

After this he removed to Magdala, a place not far from Tiberias, and after which it is thought Mary Magdalen was named, of whom we shall read by-and-by.

# Peter's Confession about Christ.

#### MATTHEW XVI.

THEN Christ came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he put his disciples' faith to the test; and after asking them what the people in general thought and said about himself, he put the question to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" He knew well all that men said, but he asked the question to lead to the second question, by which he might get a confession of their faith, after all they had seen him do. Peter, who was always forward in speaking, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" that is, thou art the anointed, by the Holy Spirit of God, to be the King of thy spiritual people Israel;—the true Messiah, and not a mere man, but the divine Son of God. Jesus then commended his faith, and for the information of the disciples around, told him that such knowledge was only given from heaven. Many saw Christ do his miracles, but they did not see his divine glory as Peter did. On this rock, on the dignity and glory of Christ, the Son of God, as on a sure rock, will he build his church; on him all believers rest, who are what make up his church, and hell, with all its powers, shall not prevail against it. Christ told Peter also that he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. You know that I told you, in explaining the parables, what the kingdom of heaven meant, and that all that heard the gospel were in the boundaries of this kingdom, so that it means the spiritual privileges which Christians enjoy in this world, as well as their happy state in the next. Now, there are no keye used in this kingdom; the expression is what we call a figure of speech. The keeper of the key of a city is a person of authority, and when Christ told Peter he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and so on, he merely meant that he would intrust him, as his faithful servant, with the preaching of his gospel, so that he should have authority to explain what was his truth, since he had so nobly declared it, and what, under the

guidance of his Spirit, he declared to be so, should be so, and whatsoever he declared not to be so, should not be so.

Christ then commanded his disciples to be still for the present, and not to make him known as "the Christ, the Son of the living God;" for, had they done so, the Jews would have proclaimed him as their king, but he came into the world for a very different purpose than that of reigning as an earthly monarch. From this time, therefore, he more fully explained to his disciples why it was that he would not be an earthly king, and that he must suffer, be killed, and raised again the third day. Peter, indeed, could not bear to hear of this, for he loved his Master, and could not without grief think of his suffering, besides which, he would rather have seen him king over the Jews. But our Lord reproved him, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" intimating that the evil spirit had suggested the thought of opposing his final suffering, for with that he was to triumph over Satan's kingdom.

He then warned his disciples of the great dangers to which they would be liable if they were true to his cause, and that they must always consider themselves like men having a cross to carry, on which they were to be executed, an allusion they well understood as a mode of execution then in practice.

## The Transfiguration of Christ.

MATTHEW XVII.

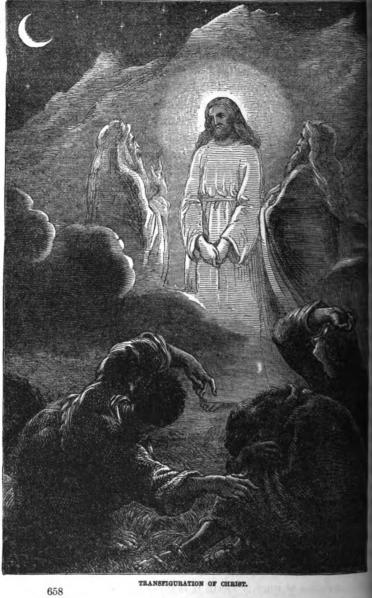
WE come next to one of the most interesting and impressive scenes in our Saviour's life on earth. He had drawn from the willing lips of Peter, and with the free assent of the others, the frank avowal of their belief, that he was the Son of God; he had told them, once and again, the story which had saddened their hearts, of his coming death by crucifixion at the hands of his cruel persecutors; and when they had urged that this must not, should not be, he had calmly, but decidedly, rebuked their lack of faith.

But his heart was full of tenderness, and that they might more clearly comprehend the glory which he had left in coming to earth, and the glory which should follow the completion of his plan of redemption, when he should return to heaven, he determined to give them such a glimpse as they should be able to bear, of the condition of the glorified saints above, and of the necessity of his death, resurrection and ascension.

For this purpose, he takes with him the three favorite disciples, Peter, James and John, and as the evening shadows are falling, leaves the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, in the extreme north of Palestine, where he had been staying for several days, and commences the ascent of one of the southern clopes of Mount Hermon. Wearily did he and his chosen disciples climb the lofty mountain, till at last, toward midnight, they are within full sight of the highest of the snow-clad summits of the mountain, which, under the bright light of the moon, towers up nearly nine thousand feet above the Here, perhaps, beneath the friendly shelter of some wide-spreading cedar, he withdraws a little from them, to engage, as usual, in prayer. The three disciples, meanwhile, wearied with their climbing, cast themselves down, and are speedily wrapped in slumber. After a while they are conscious of an intense light, which penetrates even through their closed eyelids; and, half-dazed by the suddenness of their awaking, they gaze, astonished, at the scene before them. It is not the light of the moon, though that is shining high in the bright sky of the mountains of Palestine; it is the face of their glorified Lord, shining more brightly than the sun, and illumining the whole atmosphere about them; on that glorious face there are no marks of weariness, care, or sorrow; it is radiant with beauty and joy. The poor, travelstained robes, in which he had climbed, with them, the hills that night, are no longer soiled or frayed, but "white as the light," "shining, exceeding white as snow," more brilliant, far, than the pure snows on Hermon's summit, above them; and while his whole person thus glows with heavenly light, two other forms, glistening, though less brilliantly, with the same heavenly radiance, stand on either side of him. By a sudden intuition, the disciples at once recognize them as Moses and Elijah, the greatest lawgiver of Israel and the most renowned and honored of the prophets; they had been in heaven, the one fifteen hundred, and the other nine hundred years, and now they have come to do homage to him who had left his throne above, to fulfil the provisions of the law, and the predictions of the prophets.

The disciples are dumb with astonishment and awe; they seem to themselves to be in a dream; yet every sense is widely and intensely awake. As they gaze, they listen, and lo! these heavenly visitants are talking, in tones of reverence, with their Master; they are speaking of his coming death at Jerusalem, and the glorious redemption which he will thereby accomplish. Peter, uplifted by the ecstatic vision, and "not knowing what he said," exclaims at once, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one

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for Elias." His idea seems to have been, that, in such goodly company, and with so much of heaven's own glory around them, it was far better for them to remain permanently, than to go back to Galilee, or to Jerusalem, and to be subjected to the cruel persecutions of the Scribes and Pharisees. No answer was made to the bold speech of the impulsive disciple, and suddenly a bright yet dense cloud overshadows the whole group, and a still deeper awe overwhelms them as they pass into the cloud; and from the cloud proceeds a voice, tender, yet terrible in its tenderness, and it utters these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The affrighted disciples fall upon their faces, and so remain until Jesus comes and touches them and says, "Arise, and be not afraid." Then lifting up their eyes they see their Lord and Master only, and in his ordinary apparel. These three disciples never forgot that scene. Two of them, John and Peter, referred to it, expressly, in their writings,\* and the third, the first apostolic martyr, was very soon admitted to see the glory of his ascended Lord, in the sanctuary above. But the object which Jesus had in view, to confirm their faith in him, as the Son of God, the Redeemer from sin, and the one atoning Sacrifice, was accomplished. Thenceforth, in a higher sense than the other disciples or apostles, they were his witnesses; for them, Moses and Elijah had appeared in adoring reverence of their Lord; for them, they had spoken of his death and sacrifice; to them, there had come "the voice from the excellent glory," proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God; they had been, above all others, the eye-witnesses of his majesty.

As Jesus and his three disciples descended from the mountain in the morning, they found themselves suddenly translated from the glory of the heavenly state, to the cares, anxieties and distresses of this mortal life. The nine disciples who had been left behind, in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi, had found their faith tested, and proved insufficient, in a case of possession by evil spirits, accompanied by epilepsy. It had been brought to them by the father and some cavilling Scribes, and they had attempted to cast out the evil spirits, perhaps relying upon their own power, perhaps with but weak faith in the power of Christ, and had failed utterly. Taunted by the Scribes, surprised and mortified at their failure, they were utterly despondent, when Jesus appeared upon the scene, and, with a word, cast out the spirits, and healed the child. To these weak disciples, he administered, in private, a mild reproof for their want of faith, but showed them the necessity of prayer and fasting, to accomplish the desired miracle.

In this chapter we also read of Christ's paying the tribute money at Capernaum. This was a half-shekel, paid yearly, for the service of the





THE JEWISH SHEKEL

temple. As he was the Son of God he was not liable to pay a tribute, but lest offence should be taken on account of his refusal, he preferred to do it. Yet it appears, he who had the world at his command chose to be so humble and poor for our sakes,

that he had not the small sum wherewith to pay this tribute money. So h worked a miracle to obtain it. He chose so to do, to show his disciples at if he was poor, it was not because he was obliged to be so, but because he chose to be so, and to give them additional proofs that he knew all things, and could do all things. He knew that in the midst of the sea there was a fish that had swallowed the sum of money he wanted, and he told Peter to go and cast in his hook, and catch him, and pay with the money the tax that was demanded for him and Peter.

# Christ teaches Humility, Kindness, Self-denial, and Forgiveness of Injuries.

#### MATTHEW XVIII.

CHRIST here teaches us not to be proud. His disciples asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Our Lord knew their thoughts, he knew also that they had been talking to each other about this subject. They did not yet clearly understand that his kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom: and, supposing that he would yet reign over the Jews in Jerusalem, they had almost quarrelled among themselves about who had the right to be his chief officers in managing his government.

"Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him, and he expects to be Lord Chancellor, or Lord Chamberlain of the Household, and so to be the greatest. Judas had the bag, and therefore he expects to be Lord Treasurer; which, though now he come last, he hopes will then denominate him the greatest. Simeon and Jude are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the prince, and, therefore, hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and, therefore, why should he not be preferred?"

Mr. Henry supposes that some such thoughts as these passed between them when they asked Christ to settle the matter. A little child happened to be near, and Jesus took and set him in the midst of them, and told them that unless they were as humble as that little child they could never enter into his kingdom—the kingdom of heaven, and that the humblest among them was the greatest.

Again, Christ here teaches us not to give offence. We should be careful, as much as possible, to offend nobody in any way. But the offence of which he here speaks is particularly against his humble followers and servants. We must not despise one of these his little children, how poor and despised soever he may be by a wicked and sneering world.

Christ also here teaches us self-denial, to part with things that we even dearly love, rather than lose our souls. He tells us that we are to cut off our hand and foot, and pluck out our eye, rather than let them stand in the way of our salvation. He does not, however, mean that we should really do so, but he does mean that whatever hinders it, if it be even as dear to us as these parts of our body, we must be ready to give it up. An amusement, though ever so delightful, if it leads us into sinful habits and company, must be parted with. A friend and companion that would draw our hearts away from Christ, though we love him ever so much for his kindness in other respects, must also be parted with. Many such right hands must be cut off, and many such right eyes must be plucked out.

Another thing here taught is forgiveness of injuries. And this is a very hard thing indeed to learn. When Christ talked on this subject, Peter wished to know how many times he might be offended by another, and yet forgive him,—"Seven times?" said he. "Yes," said Jesus, "as much as seventy times seven." It is not likely that any one would offend so often as this, so that our Lord meant that we should always be ready to forgive those that injure us.

Our Lord enforces forgiveness by a parable about a steward that owed his lord ten thousand talents, and yet he forgave him his debt; but a fellow-servant happening to owe the steward only a hundred pence, though he had been so kindly treated by his lord under like circumstances, yet cruelly threw his poor fellow-servant into prison till he should pay him



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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

every farthing. His lord, however, heard of it, and, as the steward's debt was still due in law, to punish him for his cruelty he laid hold of him and threw him into prison also.

God forgives us our sins, though they are great as the ten thousand talents; we ought, therefore, surely to forgive the hundred pence due to us from others, and to pass by their little offences, when they are ready to express any sorrow that they have done us injury; and, even if that be not the case, we should not render evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing. We have seen a hard-hearted man softened by receiving kindness for injuries.

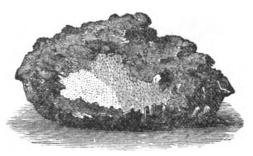
## Christ receives Little Children.—Converses with a Rich Young Man.

## MATTHEW XIX. 13-30.

In this chapter we read of little children being brought to Christ, that he might bless them, and pray over them, as it was usual with the Jews to do. Most likely they were parents, or it might be friends, who brought these children to Jesus. Children should feel themselves very happy when they have parents or friends who take them to Christ and ask for his

blessing upon them. They cannot now do this exactly in the same way, for Christ is ascended up into heaven, but they can take them in prayer, and, though Christ is in heaven, he can still bless them there.

The disciples thought that these parents were troublesome, but Christ did not think so, nor will he ever think you trouble-



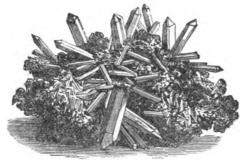
EASTERN GOLD.

some for going to him. He says, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." What he said to the disciples he says now, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Another thing here recorded is a conversation of Christ with a rich young man. This young man was desirous of going to heaven, and wished to know what he should do to enable him to get there. In this respect he was better than some people, who hope to go to heaven when they die, but live

all their days as if they cared nothing about it. He called Christ "Good Master,"—or good Teacher,—but Christ told him there was no one good but God, and as he only considered Christ as a teacher, and did not see his divine glory, he was wrong to give any human being the title of good.

Jesus told this young man, who had no notion of believing in him as a Saviour, but only thought of doing something to become eternally happy, that if he would keep the commandments, all would be right. The young man said that he had kept them all. He did, indeed; but knew little of his own heart to say so, for a wrong thought breaks the commandments, as well as a wrong word or deed. He should, as Mr. Henry observes, instead of saying, "All these have I kept, what lack I yet?" rather have said, with shame and sorrow, "All these have I broken, what shall I do to get my sins pardoned?" and thus have, at least, avoided his claim of self-righteousness.



EASTERN SILVER

Christ, however, soon put him to the test. He proved that he was an idolater, and so broke the very first commandment. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He did not, indeed, bow to idols wrought out of gold and silver, as the heathen did, but still he loved his gold and silver above everything besides—he gave his heart to his riches, and

that was sin enough. Jesus told him to sell everything he had, and give to the poor, and follow him. Not that Christ requires this of us, he leaves us to enjoy what his providence gives us, and be thankful for it; but here was a particular case, which put this young man's heart to the test, for "when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions;" and he could not give these up to enter into life.

After the young man was gone, our Lord showed his disciples, from this example, how difficult it was for a rich man to enter heaven. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." That is, it is a great difficulty for a rich man, surrounded with the snares of riches, to enter into the kingdom—for this is what the words mean.

This incident led Peter, who was as impulsive as ever, and had, moreover,

some of the oriental disposition to extol his own sacrifices, and seek to have them noticed and rewarded, to ask, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Of this boasting inquiry, Mr. Henry well remarks: "Alas! it was but a poor all that they had forsaken; one of them (Matthew) had, indeed, quitted a place in the custom-house; but Peter and the most of them had only left a few boats and nets, and the appurtenances of a poor fishing trade; and yet see how big Peter there speaks of it, as if it had been some mighty thing: 'Behold, we have forsaken all!'" However, what they had left was their all, and Christ accepts of a little sacrifice, where we cannot make a great one; and in answering his question, Christ wisely reminded him that his rewards were mainly in the future life, and that many who had supposed themselves to be first should be last, and the last should be first.

## The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.—Christ foretells his Sufferings.—The two Blind Men.

#### MATTHEW XX.

THIS chapter contains four things, which we shall briefly notice in the order in which they stand.

First,—The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.

Here our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven—or the season of proclaiming the gospel to poor sinners—to a person who kept house and hired servants. Being in want of some to work in his vineyard, he "went out early in the morning to hire laborers." "And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a-day, he sent them into his vineyard." Our Lord here means a coin called the Roman penny, which was of more value than ours, and equal to about seventeen cents of our money; this, indeed, was low for wages, but they differ very much in all parts of the world, and even in our own country, in some parts not being more than half what they are in others.

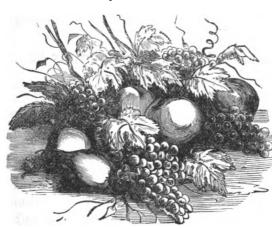
Several hours after, the householder went out, and finding more laborers wanting work, he hired them also. Three hours after that he employed some more to work, and three hours after that still more. And now it drew toward the end of the day. "And about the eleventh hour, and within an hour of finishing work, he seeing some more standing idle, hired them also."

After they had done their work he paid them, and gave every man a penny; so that you see he gave just as much to those he employed last as

to those he employed first, though, of course, they had done but very little, while the others had done much work.

Those that had done much work began to complain on seeing the others paid as much as they were; but the good man of the house told them they had no right to do so, for he had done them no wrong; they agreed to work for a penny, and he had given them their penny; and if he chose to pay the others as much as he had paid them, though they had done less, he had a right to do as he pleased with his own.

Now the Jews were very jealous of the Gentiles, or nations not of the Jews; and so selfish that they could not bear to hear of the grace of God being bestowed upon them, after they themselves had, for so many ages,



FRUITS OF THE VINEYARD

been ranked among the servants of God. This parable was, therefore, to reprove their selfishness, an l to show that God has a right to do with all nations as, in his grace, he pleases; and, also, it teaches us that if he gives us any mercies, and especially the blessings of heaven at last, it is not according to what we have done-for our services are but poor at the best-but according to his own great generosity and grace.

The second thing our Lord here mentions is the sufferings which were coming upon him. These he had twice before named to his disciples, and so he prepared their minds for the terrible event of his death.

The third thing is a singular petition made to him, through their mother, by the sons of Zebedee, James and John, who were two of his first disciples. It was no less than that they should have the first places of honor in his kingdom; for, though he had told them of his death, they seemed either not to understand it, or to suppose—which was most probable—that after his death he would mount the throne of Judah, and become king of the Jews: so they asked that they might sit nearest to him when he should be king—the one on his right, and the other on his left hand.

The right hand of a person of rank was always considered to be a place of honor; and Cyrus, the great Persian king, of whom we read in Scripture, used to place the guests he valued near his left hand, because his heart was on that sice of him, and he thought that being placed near that was a great sign of his affection.

Our Lord replied to the ambitious disciples,—"Ye know not what ye ask." They were pleasing themselves with the prospect of honors, when all the time there was nothing but suffering before them. And he said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" To this they replied, "We are able." They thought that if they could have the dignity at last, a little pain or suffering would be of no consequence in the way. Jesus then let the disciples know that they should, indeed, drink of the same cup with himself, and so be partakers of a great honor; but that cup should be sufferings; and, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." The honors of the kingdom of heaven were, however, not given by him, who was in our flesh, but by his Father, God, who is a Spirit; and mortals were not to have their pride and curiosity gratified about what he would please to do in heaven.

The fourth thing in this chapter is the petition of two blind men, who were "sitting by the way-side," and "when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" This was a request that Jesus would not deny. "The multitude rebuked them." Some who were his real friends thought, perhaps, that they were troublesome, and his enemies did not like their honoring him by calling him "Lord," and "Son of David;" but "Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

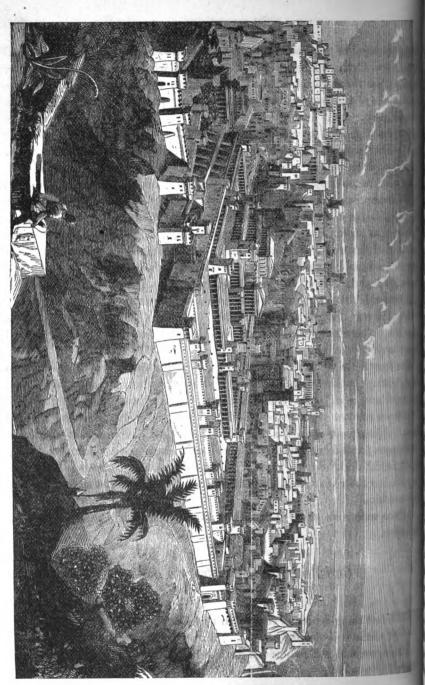
"Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" is a cry that Jesus still hears.

## Christ's triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

#### MATTHEW XXI.

THE first thing which is related in this chapter is the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

Having commanded two of his disciples to go into a neighboring village, where they would find an ass tied, and a colt with her, which they were to



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bring to him, they did as they were told; and there—as he had said who knew all things—they found the beasts ready for his use. "And they brought the ass and a colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."

Christ was followed by a multitude wherever he went. His fame in doing good caused many to go to him to receive benefits, and others went to see this wonderful person. These strewed the way on which he was to ride, some with their garments and some with branches of trees, among which it is supposed were quantities of beautiful roses, which grew in those parts. This was a method of paying honor to great persons, and is still practised in the same parts of the world, and was intended to be in honor of Christ. And the people cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Hosanna means "Save, I beseech," or "help us, we beseech thee, thou Son of David, the Messiah!" words which were used by the people at the feast of tabernacles.

Now "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." The prophecy here quoted is found in Zechariah ix. 9, and by Sion is meant Jerusalem. Here Christ claimed authority, being King over his church, and in token of it he rode, as the judges of old, on an ass. At this time, indeed, the great, and they only, rode upon horses; so that Christ did not enter Jerusalem in worldly splendor, but still he entered it like one bearing a high dignity. And this fulfilment of prophecy was one of the many marks which the prophets gave, by which the Messiah was to be known. Had not Christ so gone into Jerusalem, one of the marks to show him as the true Messiah would have been wanted; while every mark which so distinguished him was a confirmation of his character and office, and so must establish our faith in him.

Another thing here recorded is Christ's entrance into the temple, or rather that part of its courts in which were daily sold frankincense, oil, wine, and other requisites for sacrifice, such as doves, lambs, and oxen. It was near the time of the passover, and as many of these were then wanted, the courts were well stocked. This custom was most likely in imitation of the heathen, who did the same in their temples. Among the traders were also money-changers; these were persons who accommodated the people with proper coin for any foreign coin which they had taken from any of the

neighboring nations with whom they traded, and in so doing they over-reached their customers, and were guilty of shameful extortions. All these things made our Lord very indignant; he could not bear to see the house of God profaned, and such wickedness practised; and he cast out the dealers, and "overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves: "—a place as bad as the caves in which robbers hid who infested Judea.

That Christ should have disturbed these people, and, though numerous, have driven them out in the midst of their gains, and for the time have



ROBBERS HIDING.

spoiled their trade, is a proof that they were over-awed by something in him, while their own consciences being guilty, they were the more easily affrighted when they were so attacked.

Returning in the morning to Jerusalem, having slept in the quiet village of Bethany, which was only two miles from the city, it is said "he hungered." Jesus hungered! Think on this; he who was the bread of life was himself hungered! Seeing a fig-tree growing in the way, he would

have refreshed himself with a fig: but though it had plenty of fine leaves, it appears that it had no fruit, and he pronounced sentence upon the tree: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the figtree withered away." This was a sign by which he taught his disciples that the Jewish nation, which made such appearance of being as the garden of the Lord, were like nothing but the fig-tree, which bore only leaves, and no fruit. And it teaches us also that mere show is not what Christ looks for, but he expects us to bear something good, if we profess to bring forth the fruits of holiness.

The chief priests could not let Christ alone, and as soon as he had returned

to the temple, and began to teach the people the way to heaven, they beset him, and wished to know who authorized him for his work. Now they might have easily seen by the miracles that he did, that he was divinely authorized, and if any doubt had been in their minds, and they had humbly asked him for information, he would have given it; but knowing the obstinate hatred and malice of their hearts, that they would not be convinced, he gave them no direct reply, but only put a question to them which obliged them to keep silence.

They, the chief priests, had hated John the Baptist, and, it was believed, had urged Herod to imprison him, but the people had always regarded

him as a prophet, and would not allow him to be spoken against. So Christ asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men? of the two it must be. Now they felt that they could not say it was from heaven, for then Christ and the people could justly have reproached them for not believing on him, and for persecuting a prophet of God, and yet, if they said it was from men, they would equally expose themselves to difficulty, since the people believed otherwise, and would have been enraged against them. So they told a falsehood, and said, "We cannot tell." Then our Lord told them that as they would not



answer his question, he would not answer theirs, and so he confounded them.

After this he instructed the people by interesting parables. The first of these is usually called "The Two Sons." By this he taught the sin of pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them.

Our Lord afterwards said, "Hear another parable;" and then spoke the parable of "The Husbandmen."

This parable was to show how they had treated the servants of God whom he had sent to them; for they had ill-used and killed his prophets, one after another, and in the end God had sent himself, the Son of God, but they used him no better, and were now conspiring to put him to death.

We should have supposed that the priests and Scribes would have felt ashamed when they found that the parable described their wickedness; instead of which, they even then sought to lay hands on him, "but at the time they were afraid lest the multitude should take his part, as he was then high in favor with them."

There are two verses near the end of this chapter which we must just In the forty-second verse you read, "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" This is a figure of speech, and refers to some words in the hundred and eighteenth Psalm. The church of Christ-or "the congregation of faithful men" of which it is formed—is compared to a building; and, as there is one stone which is of great importance to a building, and is called the chief corner-stone, because it supports the building, so Christ is the support of all his church, and the whole building rests upon him. But the Jewish builders—the Scribes, Pharisees, and priests—would have had a church without him. rejected Christ; and so he was the stone which these builders refused, but which was, nevertheless, the chief foundation which God laid in Zion, or his church, on which sinners, in every age of the world, must build their hopes of salvation. Our Lord goes on to say in the next verse but one, the forty-fourth, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." The Jews knew very well what our Lord referred to. They had two ways of stoning criminals; the one was by throwing stones upon them, the other was by throwing them from a high place down upon stones; and as in both cases the criminal died, so he intimated to the Jews that, as the person falling on the stone does not hurt the stone, but only himself, so those who opposed him would be their own ruin, and, on whomsoever his power fell, it would be like the falling stone crushing the individual beneath its weight.

The Parable of the Marriage Supper.—Conversations of Christ with the Pharisees.

### MATTHEW XXII.

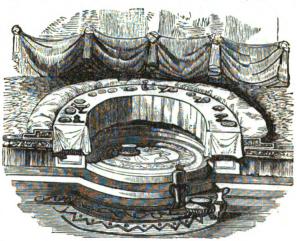
THIS chapter begins with another parable known by the name of "The Marriage Supper; or the Great Supper."

This parable had a like meaning with the last. The blessings of Christ's

kingdom were offered to the Jews, but they rejected them, and ill-treated his servants, who invited them to feed on the bread of life. Their city Jerusalem would therefore be attacked by the Roman armies, and their city burned. The heathen nations, who were as the people on the highways, poor and wretched, without the knowledge of God, were then to learn about Jesus Christ, and when they should hear the glad news of salvation through him, declared by his faithful servants, they would accept of his invitation, and so hasten to the feast.

We must now notice the conversations of our Lord with his adversaries. Mortified at his parables, the Pharisees took counsel together to try and catch him saying something that they might accuse him of speaking against

the emperor at Rome. The Jews had then a king, Herod; but he held his crown under the Roman emperor the people having been so far conquered as to pay tribute to him. So the Pharisees took with them some of Herod's cunning courtiers, and asked Christ if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?—that is, whether, according to the law of Moses, they



AN EASTERN DINING-ROOM.

should pay tribute to a heathen? Now if our Lord had said it was lawful, the people would have been enraged at him, for they did not like Cæsar, who was a Roman, taxing them, who were Jews; and, if he had said it was not lawful, they would have carried him before the Roman magistrates, and have had him put to death for teaching rebellion against Cæsar's authority. By such a subtle question, therefore, any other person would have been liable to be entrapped; but our divine Lord "perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?" meaning, whose likeness was that stamped upon the penny, as the queen's head is stamped upon the English coin, with her

name and dignity around it. "They say unto him Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Now, they could not say that he had taught rebellion against Cæsar, for having his coin in circulation among them was a sign that they were subject to his authority; and so he hinted as much as that they were to give him his dues, while he left them to think what were the dues of Cæsar. And they could not say that he had set Cæsar above their divine law; for he told them they must at the same time give to God all that was due to him.



ROMAN MAGISTRATE

This prudence and wisdom confounded them, and they left him.

By-and-by the Sadducees came to him. This sect among the Jews denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the last day; indeed, they denied even a future state, and supposed that when they died there was an end of them forever. Now, they thought that they should perplex our Lord in teaching this doctrine, if they questioned him about a curious case that perhaps

had or at least might happen. Seven brothers had had the same wife, the first brother dying, and then the second, on to the last; and so they married her one after the other, which they could do by the Jewish law. Then, said they, if the resurrection is to take place, what a curious difficulty she and they will be in, for whose wife is she then to be? Our Lord, in reply, told them that they were quite mistaken; that there was no marrying in heaven, and that all there were as angels-happy without the need of those domestic comforts which are wanted here. And, with respect to the resurrection, he referred to the language of their own Scriptures in such a way that they could not possibly contradict him-"Have ye not read

that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" This was the language of God to Moses at the burning bush; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then all dead. Now, added Jesus, "God is not the God of the dead, but of

the living;" if these were never to rise again, and their spirits were not still living, he could not be called their God. Therefore God is not the God of the dead, who are not, but of the living, who now exist. Our Lord would give no direct answer on state matters when asked about Cæsar, for his kingdom was not of this world; but, when the Sadducees disputed a great truth, he directly declared it, for he came to bring "life and immortality to light," or to make them clear as the light of day, "by the gospel." The Sadducees supposed that when the body died the soul died with it; but Christ gave them to understand the very con-



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trary—that the soul did not die, and that the body would live with it. The spirit lives, but the spirit is not a perfect man, and so there shall be a resurrection of the body to unite it to the spirit forever.

The Sadducees had nothing to say, and the people were all surprised at the powerful teaching of Christ.

The Pharisees were much vexed to find that our Lord had so put the Sadducees to shame, for they thought that he would gain all the people over to him; and being jealous of his popularity, they resolved to try what further could be done to confound him. So they set their heads together, and got a clever lawyer of their body to attack him. But by a lawyer you must not understand one who practised the common law of the land, as our American lawyers do, but one who understood well the law of Moses, and was accustomed to be looked up to by the people to explain it. question which the lawyer put to Christ was, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" The Jews were used to quibble and dispute about a number of trifling things, and there were many opinions among them on this question, and so the lawyer hoped that by obtaining an answer from Christ, he should set all those against him who held the opinions which he opposed. But our Lord did not hesitate one moment to reply, and he said that the great commandment was to love God with all the heart; and who could dispute this, that God has the first claims on the love of his creatures? However, as all the commandments are great, he added, "The second is

like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and what could they say against that being a great commandment? for if all men were to be guided by it, no one would ever do wrong to another. You know, indeed, that there are ten commandments, but all the rest are to prevent our oppressing, or doing wrong to our neighbor, and so our Lord made here two great commandments. The question, however, was, which one was the great commandment, and his answer did not evade it, for the whole signified as much as this—That love to God is the great commandment; for love to our neighbor, if it be of the right sort, can only be exercised by him who truly loves God.

. Christ now turned the tables, as we say, and on his part he began to question his adversaries; but they were equally defeated whether he answered or proposed the question. The question was, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" As Christ means the Messiah, whom they



READERS OF THE JEWISH LAW.

were expecting, the teachers of the people and this skilful lawyer ought to have been able to make some reply to his question; but what they said was what any little child could have answered: "The Son of David." Now every one who had learned the least about the Messiah must have known that he was to spring out of the family of David. But on their answering this question, which they could not avoid, our Lord then added another, which arose out of it, and to which they found it difficult to reply: "He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

fill I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" The words quoted are in the one hundred and tenth Psalm. The Jews understood these words to describe the Messiah, and they understood rightly—though now they did not receive that Messiah when they saw him, notwithstanding that he worked so many miracles among them, which showed him to be a most extraordinary person. Now

the Messiah was to spring from the line of David, and so he was his son after the flesh, though many generations in distance from him; yet David called him Lord. The great Jehovah is represented speaking to him, and telling him to sit upon his seat of dignity and power; and, in describing this, David, a prophet, speaking of what was to come to pass, said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand." Now if he were David's Son, said Christ, how could he be his Lord? Is a son lord over his father? Certainly not. The Pharisees were puzzled, for they looked for some great man to come to be their Messiah, and did not see that the Messiah-Christ was to be not only man in his flesh, but also THE SON OF GOD, THE LORD-Him in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead. bodily. Since, therefore, they could not see this grand part of the description of the Messiah, they could not make out how David called his son Lord, and so could not answer Christ, and were put to shame and silence. They who truly know Christ know him now to be David's Son and David's Lord; the Son of David as he was a man of his race, and yet the Son of God, and the "Lord of all"-reigning over all things, and the great Governor of his Church. And on this account they own and adore him.

After this no man durst ask Christ any more questions.

## Christ's Discourse respecting the Wickedness of the Pharisees.

#### MATTHEW XXIII.

E need only notice, in this discourse of our Lord respecting the wickedness of the Pharisees, the principal charges he makes against them. Verse the fifth.—But all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. They were fond of making a show of religion, and did everything before men, instead of secretly before God. They wore great phylacteries, or pieces of parchment on their foreheads, and on the wrists of their left arms, on which were written certain words of the divine law, to make the people believe how much they tried to remember it. And as the Jews wore fringes on the edge of their garments, to distinguish them from the heathen nations round about, so they, to distinguish themselves from others of their own countrymen, wore broader fringes than others.



Verse the thirteenth.—But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in your-selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. By woe is here meant sorrow, misery, and a threatening of dreadful punishment for such great wickedness as hypocrisy. By the kingdom of heaven is meant—not heaven itself, for happily no man has power to shut another out of heaven—but what is called "the gospel dispensation," or the time of preaching the gospel to perishing sinners, as I have before explained it to you. Now, by trying to projudice the people against Christ—the Messiah who came into the world to open the gates of this kingdom and to preach the gospel to the meek—they did as it were shut the gates of this kingdom against them;



JEWISH SCRIBES IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

and, not contented with refusing to enter in themselves, they both ruined themselves and others by persuading them not to enter in.

Verse the fourteenth.— Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. It is said by some writers that the

Pharisees, to seem very holy, prayed three times a day, and three hours at a time, so that they must have prayed nine hours a day. But they did not pray from the heart. They repeated, over and over again, some forms of prayer, without their souls going out towards God in what they said. They also made money by their prayers, and this was their object, which was a vile abuse of the design of prayer, which is to ask blessings of God for ourselves and others. And what was worse, under this pretence of praying, they devoured widows' houses; that is, they imposed upon poor widows, from whom they very often took much of the money left to them for their support, by pretending to pray for them better than they could pray for themselves.

Verse the sixteenth .- Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, whosoever

shall swear by the temple it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he is a debtor. People were accustomed to offer gifts of gold



ROBING A PRIEST.

for the use of the temple, and sometimes to swear or make oath that they would give certain gifts. Now, if they made oath to do anything, and merely said, "By the temple, or in the name of the temple, I will do it," the Pharisees said they might break their promise if they pleased; but if they swore in the name of the gold vessels of the temple they must keep their oath sacred. But our Lord said this was wicked, for one sacred promise should be kept as much as another; and if there was any difference in point

of dignity between the gold consecrated to the temple and the temple itself, the temple was the most noble, and the promise made by it ought rather to be kept. But He who knows men's hearts saw that this was all hypocrisy, and that they made this distinction, as they did that regarding the altar and the gift upon it, from corrupt and hypocritical motives. Christ called these men blind guides, since they pretended to guide others in the way to heaven, and could not see it themselves.

Verse the twenty-third.—Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. Mint, anise, and

cummin, are herbs. The Pharisees were very particular in giving the priests and Levites the tenth part of the value of everything that made their income, even to these small herbs; and they did not lose by it, for the priests made them due returns for setting this example. But they were unjust, unkind, and unfaithful to others; and so while they minded trifling things that



HEBREW PRIESTS.

cost them nothing, and turned to their advantage, they neglected to do justice and to be merciful, kind and righteous in their dealings with others.

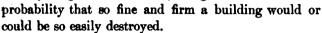
## Christ foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem.

#### MATTHEW XXIV.

THE temple of Jerusalem was a most splendid building, and king Herod had expended a great deal for its improvement, so that it was so

grand that the Jews used to say, he who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building.

The disciples one day, having taken particular notice of its fine marble columns and curious workmanship, pointed them out to Christ, that he might admire them too. Our Lord then told them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down;" which really took place not a very long time afterwards, though there was then no





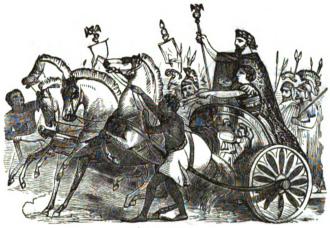
A LEVITE

The disciples were then more curious to know when this wonderful destruction should happen. Our Lord did not satisfy their curiosity, but gave them warning how they might know when it was coming on; that there should first be false prophets arising, who should deceive the people; and so it was. Then there should be wars; and there were terrible wars for a long time between the Jews and the Romans, who then ruled over them, as between them and several other nations. There should

also be "famine, pestilences, and earthquakes." There should likewise be cruel persecutions and murders of the followers of Christ; and finally the gospel should be preached to all other nations as well as to the Jews.

This would be a dreadful time. The Jews must then expect miseries never known before in the whole world. God was about to punish them for their many and great sins against him, but especially for the greatest of all sins, that of rejecting and hating Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. So dreadful would be the vengeance of the Roman armies when once Jerusalem should be besieged, that the moment there was an appearance of it, all Christians were advised to escape, and lose not a moment, but flee and hide themselves in secret places in the mountains. If they were walking to cool themselves on the tops of their Eastern houses, they must not even return to pack up anything, but hasten down outside; if at work in the field, and their clothes lay at a distance, it would be unwise to risk delay by going after them; and unfortunate would the mother be that then had to escape with the burden of a child at her bosom; or if the siege should happen in winter, miserable would it be for the poor creatures who had to hurry over bad roads and amidst swelling floods; or if on the Sabbath-day, when they were limited by the law to a short journey, it would hardly be possible to escape at all.

Then Jesus spake a parable or comparison about the fig-tree, and told them that these signs of the destruction of Jerusalem which he had given them would be as sure guides as were the leaves of the fig-tree, when they broke out, guides of the approach of the summer. But the exact time was



THE CONQUERORS.

a secret known only to God, though it would be sudden as the destruction of the world in the days of Noah.

The desolation should also be so great that, if but two were together, even one of these should perish while the other escaped, whether they were laboring in the field, or grinding at the mill: "the one" should "be taken and the other left."

Hence he told them all to "watch," and be on the look-out for these signs, that they might be ready to escape.

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins.—The Parable of the Talents.—The Day of Judgment.

### MATTHEW XXV.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the last, and refers to the same terrible event—the destruction of Jerusalem. But our divine Lord clearly glides from that awful subject, into the destruction of the world and the day of judgment.

We must ask you to read the first thirteen verses of the chapter, or we shall have no pages to spare to explain much of the parable which they contain. It is usually called "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." It refers to a custom among the Jews, and still practised among people in Eastern nations. When two persons are married, the bridegroom goes out at night to meet his wife. He has his friends with him, and she has hers, called here "ten virgins," or young unmarried women. Torches and lamps are



always carried in these processions. Our Lord represents five of the virgins as foolishly forgetting to take any oil with them. When, therefore, the party were all in a bustle to trim their lamps and light those which had gone out, while they had fallen asleep—and to go to meet the bridegroom on his arrival at the house of her father, where the bride was-they had no time to buy or get oil elsewhere, and asked the other virgins to supply them. But, as the others had only oil enough for themselves, they could not spare any to their foolish companions. So the foolish virgins had to leave the company to get oil; but, before they could get back, the procession was gone, the party had entered the bridegroom's house,

and, agreeably to their custom, the door was shut, and no further admittance given to any.

By this our Lord teaches us that if we are not prepared with grace or holiness in our hearts when Christ comes to judgment, we shall be able to get none after; and, as the foolish virgins were shut out of the bridegroom's chamber, so must we in such a case be shut out of heaven.

There is also another parable, which is known by the name of "The Parable of the Talents."

The design of Christ in this parable is to teach us all to use our time,

and abilities, and money, and whatever we have, diligently, in the best way we can, to promote his glory. These are our talents intrusted to us to use properly. The talent was a fixed weight of gold or silver; a golden talent was worth nearly fifty-seven thousand dollars, and a silver one about sixteen hundred and sixty dollars; but some of our talents are of much more value than gold and silver, and must be answered for by even the poorest amongst us, for through them we must expect to secure to ourselves such unending pleasures and joys as all the wealth of earth could not purchase—no, not so much as a tithe of.

The last thing in this chapter is a grand description of the day of judgment. Passing from the destruction of Jerusalem to that of our sinful world, our blessed Lord describes his second and final coming in all his glory, attended by all his angels, and seated on his judgment throne. All nations, of all times, shall be raised from the dead, and appear before him; and then he shall make one grand division between them, and separate forever the righteous from the wicked, just as a shepherd would divide his sheep from the goats.

Sheep and goats are not, indeed, generally seen together amongst us; we have very few goats, but in some countries abroad, especially about the hilly countries in Greece, there are flocks of both sorts of animals feeding together. Now, the righteous are often called in Scripture by the name of sheep, because they are thought to be good emblems of innocent, harmless, and pure persons, while goats, from various causes, are emblems of the opposite characters.

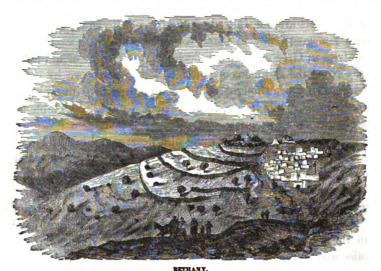
Having separated the two, the great and heart-searching Judge will place the righteous at his right hand, which is considered as the place of honor, and the wicked at his left hand, as a sign of their dishonor; or, to speak in other words, he will mark the righteous with his approval, and the wicked with disgrace and shame. He will then invite the righteous, and say to them, "Come, ye blessed"—and introduce them to his heavenly kingdom; while to the wicked he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed!" He will even notice and reward the acts of kindness done to those who love him, as if done to himself, and will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." While neglect, unkindness, and cruelty, shown towards those who love him, will equally be marked and punished; for he will say to the guilty, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

## The Passover.—The Sufferings of Christ.

### MATTHEW XXVI.

WHEN our blessed Jesus came into the world to save sinners, he knew what he had to suffer. He was to die that we might live. And now the time of his death began rapidly to approach: and he told his disciples that in two days the passover was to be eaten, in remembrance of the eating of the lamb at the escape of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and that then he was to be betrayed, that he might be crucified.

The disciples soon found that it was but too true they must lose their beloved Lord and Master. For "the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people," who had so often shown their hatred to Jesus, because he exposed their wickedness to the people, and reproved them for their hypocrisy and other crimes, now assembled together in the palace of the High Priest, called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and



kill him. They, however, did not like to venture to do so just at the passover, for they feared lest there should be "an uproar among the people." The people had received great benefits from Jesus; many of them and their friends, who would travel from all parts of Judea to the feast, had been cured of their diseases by his kindness, and had seen the miracles which he

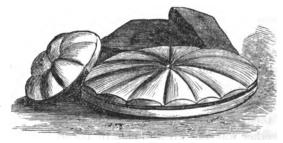
had done, and it was, therefore, natural to suppose that if they had any gratitude about them, they would avenge any insults offered to him.

A few days before the passover, Jesus came to Bethany, a village near Jerusalem, and was invited to eat at the house of Simon the leper;—very likely one who had been a leper, and whom he had cured, and so he showed him this gratitude for his kindness. At all events he entertained Christ, and it is here related to his honor.

While Jesus was eating, a woman approached him and poured some precious ointment on his head, which she had brought in an alabaster box. According to our customs, this would seem very rude, and particularly free behavior in a female. But it was different in the Jewish country, and was a mark of very high respect, the ointment being expensive, and the fragrant smell proceeding from it most grateful to all present. Some of the disciples thought the woman was extravagant; but Christ knew her motive in what she did, and commended her love. Who she was is not exactly certain, as some suppose she was Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, and others that she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The fame of her kind act—her liberal token of love

to Jesus—was, however, well known and spread abroad at that time; and wherever the gospel was preached this was mentioned to her praise.

And now the moment arrived when the sufferings of our gracious Saviour began. One of his disciples,



UNLEAVENED BREAD

Judas, the wretched man! went to the chief priests, and offered to deliver up Christ to them for thirty pieces of silver—the paltry price paid for a purchased servant—about eighteen dollars and fifty cents! They durst not take Christ publicly for fear of the people, but Judas offered to take them to one of his private retreats, and there to deliver him up; and with the greatest care, he watched for the most favorable opportunity.

There were seven days in which the Jews ate their unleavened bread,—or bread not made of yeast or anything to ferment it, and during this time the passover was celebrated. You remember that the reason of eating this bread was to keep the Jews in mind that they were delivered from Egyp-

tian bondage in the greatest haste, so that they had not even time to mix the leaven with their dough, ready made in their troughs.

Jesus sat or more properly leaned or laid down at the passover with his



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS, NO. 1

disciples. The first passover was eaten standing, as another additional sign of the haste in which the people were to escape, but this sign was afterwards not used, and now they lay down, leaning on their elbows, just as we do on a sofa, this being the fashion in the Jews' country, and is still so in that part of the world. While our blessed Saviour took the passover, he said to his disciples, "One of you shall betray me." So that he showed that he knew what wickedness was in the heart

of Judas, and that he could have escaped from his treachery if he pleased; but he came into the world to give his precious life a ransom for sinners.

His disciples were very sorrowful, and all were afraid lest they should be tempted to do so wicked a thing as to betray their beloved Lord; and they asked with great concern, "Lord, is it I?" Then he said to them, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." They

would all do this, for this was the way of eating, taking it out of one dish with their fingers, and not with knives and forks as we eat; but then this was to show how villanous the man would be; for to eat together was the greatest sign of friendship, and so this showed his conduct to be as bad as it possibly could be. Yet Judas, in order to disguise himself before the other disciples, daringly asked, "Master, is it I?" and Christ said it was he.

Jesus then took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, as is now done, after his example, at the Lord's



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS, NO. 2.

Supper; and in like manner he took the cup. When he gave the bread, he said, "This is my body"—meaning, this represents my body to be broken for you—it could not actually be his body, for his body remained the same.

So, also, he said, when he took the cup, "This is my blood, of the New Testament,"—that is, this represents my blood to be shed for sinners, and represents it by a different sign from that which has been used; hitherto the blood of beasts was shed as the sign that he was to die, but now and henceforth wine, the blood or juice of the grape, was to be the sign. Both of these—the bread and the wine—were to be taken, and afterwards to be continued in the church, and received by Christians in remembrance that Christ died for them—"for the remission of sins," that is, the pardoning of sins.

## Gethsemane.—The Sufferings of Christ.

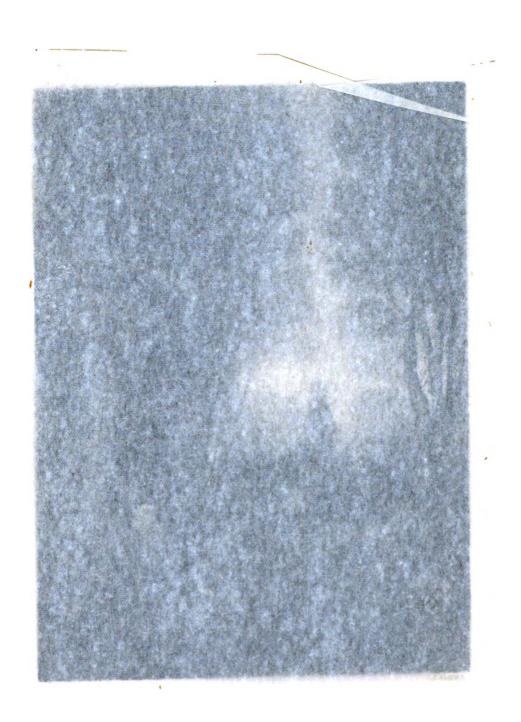
MATTHEW XXVI.-Continued.

TT was now evening, and probably as late as ten o'clock, or the fourth I hour of the night, according to the Jewish reckoning, when Jesus, after a long and tender conversation with his disciples and an earnest prayer for them in their trouble, now so close at hand, left the upper chamber, where the Passover feast had been eaten, and the Lord's Supper instituted, and passed through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, to the eastern gate which led to the Mount of Olives. On their way he continued his loving exhortations and warnings to them. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," he said; "for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." How merciful and gracious was our blessed Lord in this! He knew that these disciples, strongly as they were attached to him, would, when the actual time of danger came, all forsake him and fly. Yet, knowing that he would be left alone in his worst sufferings, he pitied their weakness, and promised to meet them again with blessings, after his resurrection. But Peter felt too strong in his love for Christ, to believe that he should abandon his Master. "Though all men," cried he, "shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." The Lord knew Peter better than he knew himself, and saw, perhaps, in this very vehemence of his protestations, that the evil in his heart was struggling with the good, and would for the time overcome it. He therefore said, very quietly, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." So near was the time of Peter's fall and disgrace, and yet so wholly unconscious was he of its approach. "Though I should die with

thee," he protested, "yet will I not deny thee." Likewise also said all the disciples.

They had by this time descended the slope from the city gate to the bridge which spanned the Kidron ravine, crossed it, and were ascending the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives. Their destination was an enclosed garden or olive orchard, known as Gethsemane, from the oil-press which was near lit, in which the oil was expressed from the ripe olives which abounded in that vicinity. It was in one of the secluded hollows of the western slope of the mountain, and was well known to the disciples, as a place where their Master often went to pray.

As they drew near to it, Jesus began to be in great distress of mind, and said to the disciples, while they were yet without the enclosure, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." His anguish of soul increased, and taking with him Peter, and James, and John, the three who had witnessed his transfiguration, he entered the enclosure. Turning to them with every feature indicating his agony of spirit, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." This craving and longing for human sympathy is perhaps the strongest evidence we could possibly have, that he, the Son of God, had taken upon him our nature; that he was, in reality, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, and was a man of like passions with us, yet without sin, while he was also the Divine Redeemer. Having made this touching appeal to the three disciples for sympathy, "he went a little farther, (Luke says, "about a stone's cast,") and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." After this earnest petition, he rose and came to the three disciples and found them sleeping, and said unto Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Luke adds these particulars: "that there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him," a rebuke to his disciples, who, notwithstanding his earnest appeals, had not even watched with him. "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Amid all this agony, he came again to his disciples, and again found them asleep; and when they were roused, they were still so dazed and heavy with sleep, that they did not know what to

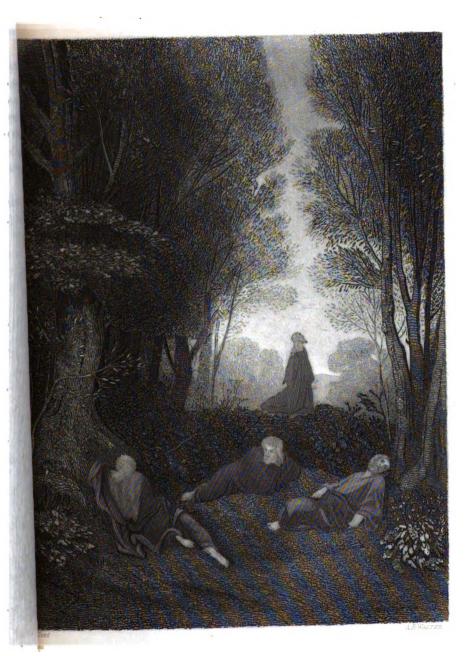


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JUSUS PRAYING IN THE CARDER.

answer him. A third time he departed to his chosen place of wrestling prayer, perhaps under the shadow of one of the old and spreading olive trees, and asked that the divine will might be accomplished, at whatever sost of suffering to him; and this time his prayer was heard and answered: strength was given to the weakened body, and thenceforth he welcomed the pain and suffering, for the sake of the redemption that should follow. Now, as he returned to his disciples, he saw the lights and torches borne by the multitude descending from the gate of the city to the Kidron ravine and bridge, and knew that this was the company led by Judas. Addressing his disciples, he said, "Sleep on, now, and take your rest." The agony which had so crushed his spirit was gone, and he now needed not their watchful care, which hitherto they could not bestow. Angels had ministered to him, and he had been heard in that which he feared. But it was now his turn to watch over them, for their enemies, as well as his, were at hand: the hour of their supreme temptation was coming, as for him it had passed; and therefore he says, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

Let us pause here, and inquire what was the cause of this terrible anguish of soul, which thus for a time overwhelmed our Lord, and made his "soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" That it was not the fear of death, not even the painful and ignominious death of the cross, is evident from several considerations; he had known from the first that he should thus die, had conversed about it with his disciples, and with Moses and Elijah, if not without emotion, yet without fear and without distress; in the twelve or fifteen hours which followed his arrest, amid the insolence and insults of priests and rabble, of Roman soldiers and malefactors, amid the cruel tortures of the thorny crown, the scourging, and the terribly painful death of the cross, he manifested not the slightest fear; his calm and dignified demeanor awed his judges, and on the cross his pardon of the dying thief, his care for his mother, his sublime prayer for his murderers, and his calm announcement of the completion of the work of redemption, all showed a spirit incapable of fear.

Weakness and exhaustion of body may have had some, though, probably, but a slight, influence. The previous week had been one of great excitement and weariness; vast multitudes had listened to his teachings; even the Greeks, first fruits of the Gentiles, had sought an interview with him; the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians had combined to entangle him in his

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talk, and all had completely failed; more than once the officers of the temple had been sent out to arrest him, and had been prevented only by some sudden change of base, or by his eloquence, which disarmed them. The knowledge, on his part, of every step of Judas in betraying him, had added to his cares and anxieties; but none of these troubles could have so weighed down his spirits, or whelmed him in such deep distress. The great cause of this fearful anguish was, that he, the Sinless One, to whom all sin was so loathsome and hateful, was to satisfy the divine law by taking upon himself the burden of the sins of the whole world; he, the guiltless and Holy One, was to bear the guilt and impurity of the sinners of all the ages. He was to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him, and with his stripes we were to be healed. But under this terrible pressure, it was not the divine nature that faltered; that had from eternity determined on this plan of salvation, and had foreknown all its details; it was the human body and the human soul, which stretched its arms outward and upward, for sympathy and comfort, under this dreadful load, and found it at last, in sweet submission to the divine will. Once more, and but for a moment, in the hours of torture which followed, did this "horror of great darkness" fall upon the dying Redeemer; it was while he was on the cross, when he uttered that bitter cry, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But the everlasting arms were again around him, and the racked and tortured body rested in the embrace of death.

But we, too, in this discussion of the causes of his terrible agony, have left the Saviour, as the betrayer approached him. Judas now drew nigh, at the head of a rabble, composed of the officers of the temple, the night watch, a small party of Roman soldiers, and such servants and hangers-on of the high-priest as could be conveniently assembled. The Roman soldiers and perhaps the officers of the temple wore swords, the rest of the party were armed with sticks or cudgels. Judas, with an infamous hypocrisy, had proposed, that in order that the officers might be able to recognize Jesus, he would go up to him boldly, and kiss him. Accordingly, as soon as they were come to the garden, the traitor hurried forward, and exclaiming, "Peace be to thee, Rabbi" (the true translation of the "Hail, Master," in the text), kissed him. Jesus replied with perfect dignity, "Comrade (not "friend," as our version has it, but an entirely different word), for what art thou come?" The other evangelists give a few items which Matthew has omitted. After this treacherous kiss, Jesus stood before the multitude, and

asked, "Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth." "Jesus answered, I am he," and such was the dignity and power which accompanied the answer that the crowd, awe-struck, retreated, and many of them fell to the ground. When they had recovered themselves, he again put the question, "Whom seek ye?" and again they answered, with bated breath. "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus, ever thoughtful of others, and especially tender of his disciples, said, "I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these (my disciples) go their way." As the Roman soldiers advanced to seize him, Peter, as recklessly and imprudently brave as ever, drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high-priest. Jesus instantly commanded him to put up his sword into its sheath, and apologizing to the soldiers for the rashness of his follower, touched and healed the wound. While they were binding him, Jesus remonstrated with the multitude, saying, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness." When the Roman soldiers had bound his hands behind his back, and moved forward with their prisoner to the high-priest's palace, all the disciples fled, under the apprehension that they too would be arrested; but John and Peter, loth to leave their Lord, followed on at a safe distance, and John first, and Peter later, entered the palace hall; Peter sitting with the servants to see the end.

In the meantime the priests and elders tried to obtain some witnesses to testify that Christ had said something in their hearing that was very wicked, and according to their law deserved death. Now none could say this in truth; so they were obliged to get false witnesses—that is, pay some bad men to say anything they wished, to justify them in pronouncing sentence on him. These vile men then declared that they had heard Christ say, that he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Christ had, indeed, said to the chief priests, more than three years before, when he had driven the traffickers and money-changers out of the temple, and they asked him for a sign of his authority, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" but this saying of his had reference to his own body, the temple which enshrined the living God, as the temple at Jerusalem was supposed to enshrine the divine Shechinah; and he had not said that he could destroy that temple. But it was evident, even to them, that this testimony was worthless; so the high-priest tried if he could get Christ to say something that would suit their purpose better, and adjured him to tell them whether or not he was "the Son of God." "Thou hast said," said Jesus; that is, thou art right-"I



HALL OF JUDGMENT

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am the Son of God." Then the High Priest rent his clothes, declared he had spoken blasphemy, and that there was no further need of witnesses. Had he not been the Son of God, he would, indeed, have spoken blasphemy, but they would not believe that he was so, though he had done miracles enough



GETHSEMANE

in the land to prove it, and therefore they now seized the opportunity of putting to death the Lord of Life and Glory.

And now the servants and soldiers spit in his face, struck him, slapped his cheeks, and having blindfolded him, asked him to tell them who did it. This was horribly wicked; and they are as horribly wicked who make sport with the name of Jesus, and use it triflingly or in jest: take care never to sport with sacred things.

Peter was all this while sitting among the servants of the High Priest, when one of the maids espied him out, and accused him of being a disciple; but Peter was afraid of suffering in the same way, and so denied it. Hat then left his seat and went to the porch or entrance of the High Priest's hall; but there he was again discovered by another maid, and then he swore that he knew nothing of Christ. After this some more persons charged him with being one of Christ's followers, and they said that his dialect proved he came from the same part of the country. Peter again cursed and swore, probably worse than before, and said he knew nothing of Christ.

Those that curse and swear show most plainly that they cannot belong to Christ, so Peter took a most effectual and wicked method to disguise himself.

Jesus had warned him of this, and told him, that before the cock should crow twice he would deny him thrice. His words now came to pass; the cock crew—Peter remembered it—his heart was ready to break—he thought how wicked he had been, and, going away, he "wept bitterly." This was a sign that he sincerely repented; but no weeping bitterly can ever wash away the foulness of your sins and of mine; that can only be done by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring healing to the wounded soul, and take away its guilt and defilement, and which "cleanseth from all sin."

### The Sufferings of Christ.—His Death.

#### MATTHEW XXVII.

WE left Christ in the hands of the chief priests and elders, condemned to die, but they had not full power to kill him; they could only show how much they desired to put him to death. About two years before this, the Romans who had conquered the Jews had taken from them the power to execute any, and therefore another council was held, to know what further to do. So they bound Jesus and led him to Pilate, the Roman Governor, who was placed over them, in order that he might execute the sentence which they had passed upon him.

While this was doing, Judas's conscience became so troubled for having basely delivered up his innocent Master, that he went and threw down the money which, for his wicked act, he had received from the chief priests and elders, and he said, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But the priests, even more hardened than he, said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." As much as to say, that is your concern, Judas, and not ours; our end is served, and so you may do as you please; and if you have betrayed the innocent, the fault is yours, and not ours.

Christ having declared himself to be the Christ or Messiah—the Sor of God—the Jews thought they had excellent grounds on which to accuse him to the Romans. They had a notion in their heads that the Messiah was to be their king, as David and others had been before, and so they thought that by Christ owning himself to be the Messiah, he professed also to be their king. This was their own fancy, for his kingdom was not of this

world, but spiritual; he never intended to sit upon an earthly throne, but to reign in the human heart, making it obedient to him from love. This fancy of theirs they told to Pilate as truth; and as the Romans would be jealous of any one claiming the throne—as Herod was when Christ was born—they thought they could bring a charge of treason against Christ. Pilate being informed of this, asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus

said unto him, "Thou sayest;" meaning, "I am." He explained, as John tells us, to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, and Pilate understood it. To the other false charges of the Jews, he would make no reply.

Now there had been a custom introduced by the Romans—perhaps to win the hearts of the lower orders of the Jews—to release some prisoner at the time of the passover. So Pilate fixed upon Barabbas, a most notorious thief and murderer, and proposed to the Jews to determine which of the two should be set at lib-

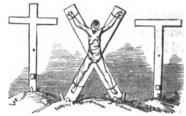


CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

erty, Barabbas or Christ. He believed Christ to be innocent, and proposed this Barabbas, whose life none could well wish to be spared, that the innocent Saviour, whom he set in contrast to him, might escape. But the chief priests and elders managed to persuade the people to demand Barabbas. Astonished at their choice, Pilate then asked what was to be done with Jesus, and they said, "Let him be crucified!"

Crucifixion was a cruel, lingering, and disgraceful punishment. Cruel, for the criminal had to bear his cross to the place of execution, and then, faint and weary, and heartbroken, he was stretched upon the wood, which

was something like the letter T. On the top part his arms were extended and his hands nailed to the wood; and on the upright part his body was to hang, supported by his nailed hands, and, being at full length, his feet were nailed to the lower part. The cross was then lifted up, and with a jerk it was thrust into a hole in the ground, thus adding to the poor



FORMS OF CROSSES

victim's sufferings. The criminal sometimes lingered a long time before he expired, and was killed at last. This mode of putting to death was only practised on wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and murderers, and the vilest of men; and it showed, indeed, the bitter and horrid malice of the wicked Jews against the innocent Saviour, that they wished him to suffer no less a punishment; and they thought that this would frighten all his followers, as well as make them ashamed of him.

Pilate was shocked at the Jews, yet he had not courage nor uprightness enough to refuse them their wicked request; so, to quiet his own conscience in giving up the innocent Saviour to be put to death, he took some water and washed his hands before all the people, which was a custom to show that a man took no part in the murder of any person; and he said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Then answered all the people and said, "His blood be on us and on our children;" that is, "we will bear the blame, whatever may happen from it, so let him die; we care nothing for the consequences, we are not afraid of them."

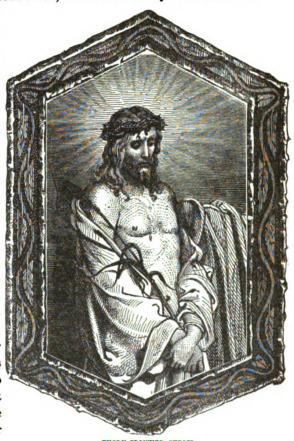
Oh miserable people! His blood was afterwards upon them indeed! Nearly their whole nation were butchered, enslaved, driven into perpetual banishment, and scattered among all nations, as they are to this day: and the Romans, whom they used as the tools to do their wicked deed, were the men that afterwards executed the Divine vengeance. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Jesus was scourged; stripped; dressed in mockery in a scarlet robe, like a pretended king; a crown of thorns was made and put upon his head, that his tender temples might be pierced and made to bleed; and a reed, or cane, was put in his hand as a sham sceptre. All of this the Saviour submitted

to with the greatest meekness. Then, to finish their mockery, the Jews bowed their knee to him, and cried, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Now they spit upon him out of contempt, and smote him on the head with the reed, and finally took off his mock robes, and led him away to be crucified.

On their way to the place of execution, they met with a man of Cyrene, named Simon, thought by some to have been attached to Christ; and as they feared that our blessed Lord could hardly live to be crucified, having suffered so much, they made Simon carry the cross.

At length they came to a spot called Golgotha, and there "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink." Compassionate people usually mixed a drink to cheer the spirits of the victims going to execution, and to stupefy their griefs; but none offered to soothe the blessed Jesus. Vinegar would have quenched his



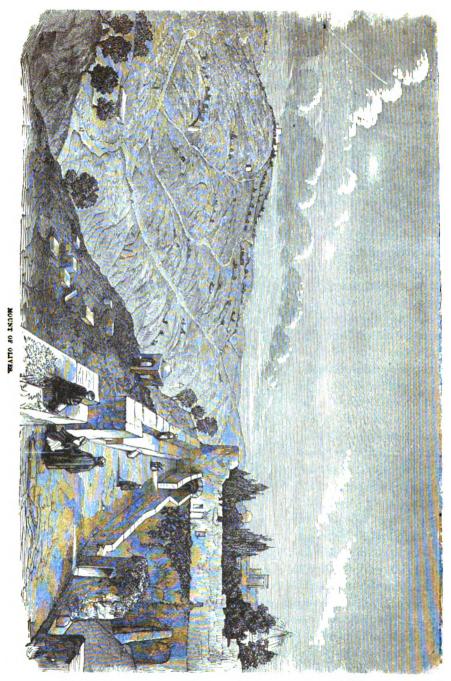
THORN-CROWNED CHRIST.

thirst, but gall mixed with it was nauseous indeed!

And now he was stripped naked, and his garments were parted by lots among the soldiers who were engaged in his execution; and, being crucified, the soldiers sat down to watch him, lest his disciples should take him.

It was usual to write the offender's accusation, and to have it affixed to the cross; Pilate wrote that of Christ, "This is JESUS, the King of the Jews."

Two thieves were crucified with him, at the same time and place.

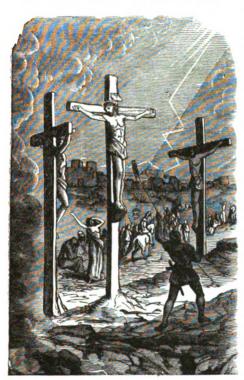


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As the cross was placed by the roadside, the mob from Jerusalem that passed by it wagged their head in derision at Jesus, and reviled or blasphemed him, and told him that if he was the Son of God, he ought to show it, by coming down from the cross! He was, indeed, soon to show that he was the Son of God, but it would be in another way, after their malice was satisfied, by rising from his tomb. The chief priests and scribes also united in mocking him, and said, if he would come down from the cross they would believe him. These priests and Scribes knew that he had wrought wonderful miracles, yet they would not believe him; and now they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and must bear their guilt. One of the crucified thieves also mocked him.

At noon-day, called by the Jews "the sixth hour," there came on a

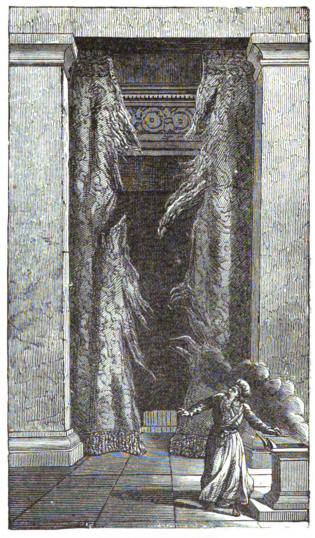


CRUCIFIXION.

the sixth hour," there came on a darkness, which lasted for three hours, and spread over all the land. And at the ninth hour, or "three o'clock in the afternoon," Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and so his human nature sank upon the cross. Some thought that he cried out from being so thirsty, and handed him some vinegar in a sponge put upon a reed; and now Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, or yielded up his spirit.

Oh, what were his sufferings! His bodily sufferings were indeed great, but these were nothing compared with those of his soul. For God to forsake him at that moment, how awful! But why did God forsake him? God hates sin. The innocent Jesus then bore our sins. This was the reason why he yielded to death. The Jews were

wicked in killing him, and did it all of their own accord and out of the malice of their own hearts; but they could not have killed Christ if he had



THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE RENT

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not willingly given himself to their malice and cruelty. And this, that in his death, he might bear the sins of all his people, for he himself was innocent, and it was these sins that caused God to withhold his comforts from him. Well may we adore the blessed Jesus for such a display of love. But, if he cried out beneath the weight of man's guilt, what must those sinners endure, who will not believe in him and be saved, and so doom themselves to bear the weight of their own guilt forever?

But besides the great darkness, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the earth quaked, and even the rocks were split asunder. The thick tapestry veil was rent, as a sign that all that was sacred in the ceremonics of the law was now over, and those ceremonies of no use; for the great Saviour and sacrifice whom all signified was now come, and had finished his work for guilty men. The earth quaked, perhaps as a sign of the dreadful shaking which was soon to befall the whole Jewish nation; and the rocks were split asunder to shame the hearts of the people, more hardened than those rocks.

These things convinced the soldiers who watched Jesus, and the centurion who commanded them, that he was no common person; and they were struck with fear, and said, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Many women also, who followed him from Galilee, were witnesses of his crucifixion; among whom "was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

On the evening of this day, when the Jewish Sabbath was about to begin, the body of Jesus was obliged to be removed; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and secretly attached to Christ, went to Pilate and begged his body, which could not be taken down and buried without permission being given by the Roman governor. Leave being granted, "he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock"—for the sepulchres of the Jews were made in rocks;—"and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

The day following, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, and, fearing lest the disciples should steal the body of Christ and say it was risen, they begged that they might have the tomb guarded. So they made all as sure as they could, and sealed the stone that nobody might remove it, and set a watch or guard of soldiers to prevent any one approaching. This was one of the happiest events that could have taken place, because it furnished in the end the surest proofs that Jesus was not stolen away, but that he arose from the grave.

#### The Resurrection of Christ.

#### MATTHEW XXVIII.

It is reckoned that Christ lay in the tomb thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. At the dawn of day, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, went to the sepulchre, still desiring to see the dear remains of their beloved Lord. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." These keepers were Roman soldiers, the most courageous men in the world; but they were frightened at the scene. If the resurrection of Christ was so awful, what must his coming to Judgment be! How will the guilty quake then!

When the women approached the sepulchre, the Angel spoke kindly to them, and told them that the Lord was risen, and desired them to tell the glad news to the disciples, who were greatly discouraged at his crucifixion



ROMAN GUARDE

and death, and they were to assure them he would soon meet them in Galilee.

The women ran with all speed to tell the disciples, but on their way Jesus himself met and saluted them; and they fell at his feet, and held them, and worshipped him: and he repeated the orders to go into Galilee.

But what did the Roman soldiers do? They were set to guard the body of Jesus, and yet he had escaped. How could they escape punishment for this? They went into the city and told the simple story how it happened, and how terrified they were. "They showed unto the chief priests all the

things that were done;" how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; for one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as

snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women, coming to the sepulchre, were shown by him where the body had been laid,

but was now gone; and how, that after they had recovered themselves from the fright, they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any others; all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery, corruption, sloth and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what further was best to be done.



ROMAN LICTORS.

Now it would not do to bring the guards to trial for letting Jesus escape, for they would have defended themselves by telling the truth, and only have spread the account of the resurrection more abroad. So it was settled that a story should be made up, that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while the guards slept; and the elders gave the soldiers a large reward to keep the resurrection secret. But this story, after all, was a very poor one; for it was not very likely that the timid disciples, who all forsook Christ and fled, would have stolen his body from the Roman soldiers; nor that all the guards would have been asleep; and even if they had, it was more than probable that some would have roused up, and the disciples would then have endured their vengeance. And then it was very strange that the Roman soldiers should have been saved from punishment, after they had slept upon their watch, which by their laws was deemed a heavy crime: but it was settled that the Jewish elders should explain the matter to the Roman governor if the affair came under his notice, and that so the soldiers should not be injured. The bungling nature of the story shows that the soldiers told a lie, and that they could not prevent the resur-

rection of our blessed Saviour, though they were even set to watch his tomb. Either they were asleep or awake; if awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took it away? How could they then depose that it was stolen? Then, again, the evidence of the apostles furnishes us with arguments of the clearest and most powerful kind: 1st. They were poor, uninfluential and timorous creatures; 2d. The number of them forbids collusion, for the witnesses to the resurrection were very many; 3d. The facts they avow were apparent to their own eyes; 4th. The concurrence of all their testimony; 5th. They gave their evidence before Jews, heathers, philosophers, rabbins, courtiers and lawyers; 6th. They bore evidence right at Jerusalem, in the synagogues and the prætorium; 7th. Their evidence was just at the time of the occurrence, when everything was being investigated, or seemingly so, by those in authority; and 8th. The motives prompting the testimony must have been for truth's sake, for all knew that in so testifying they were exposed to the enmity and persecution of the Jewish authorities.

The story, reported by the Jews even to this day, is a delightful encouragement to our belief that Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the third day, but not the only proof we possess; for the eleven disciples went into Galilee, and there he met them after his resurrection, and he commanded them to go and preach the gospel to every creature; to tell men the glad tidings, or good news, that he had died to save sinners, and that whosoever believed in him should never perish; and that he had risen again, and was therefore an ever-living Saviour, to whom all sinners might look for salvation, to the end of time. When any professed sincerely to believe their message, they were to baptize them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; i. e., in the name of the blessed Trinity; and this was to show, that, in like manner, the Holy Spirit would purify their hearts who truly believed in him, and was to be a bold avowal before the world, that they were the followers of Him who was crucified. As a further proof that those baptized were his followers, they were to do all his holy commands, and then all of them might expect his blessing and favor, "even unto the end of the world. Amen."



## GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK:

On written by Mark, under the direction of the apcetle Peter, through whose ministry doubtless Mark was converted. That this grapel received the sanction, and was received into the Christian Church upon the authority, of Peter, is conceded. St. John had seen it, with the other two gospels, and wrote his own as supplementary to them. Papias speaks of the writings of Matthew and Mark as existing at the beginning of the second century, when he talked with the disciples of the apostle. This, with the other gospels, was known to Justin Martyr in the second century, when it was read in all the churches. And during the latter part of the first, and the former part of the second century, the apostolical authors, Clemens, Hermes, Barnabas and Ignatius made use of it, as also the other gospels. But we need not add to these statements the list of evidence showing that this gospel, though not written by an ap-stle—as in the case of Luke's gospel—was received as suchnite, was divinely inspired, and was indoesed as such by the apostles themselves: this latter fact inducing the early church to receive it at once into the canonical books. It carries with it the stamp of the Holy Spirit, and stands before the mind of man as a monument with foundations deeper and summit higher than any human conception. It is remarkable for its simplicity and clearness, and is usually regarded as a model record of facts. It is divided into sixteen chapters, and furnisher most of the things given in Matthew, adding thereto some further particulars.



ARK is shorter than Matthew. It is a repetition of the same history by another hand, with here and there some few facts not mentioned by Matthew. Some of these are all that need therefore be added in this place.

In the fourth chapter we have the Parable of the Seed, which appears to have been delivered at the same time that the Parable of the Sower was, as we have read in Matthew, but was not mentioned by him with that parable. Thus, that nothing important might be lost,

one evangelist has supplied what another has omitted, as well as confirmed the truth of all that the other has said.

The parable given by Mark is contained in the verses between the twenty-fifth and the thirtieth, of the fourth chapter.

In the seventh chapter, Mark gives us the particulars of Christ's curing a deaf man. "And he put his fingers in his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Be opened," and his deafness was cured, and "he spake plain." Most likely he might have once had his hearing, and had learned to speak a little, but

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having lost his hearing early in life, he could learn no more; but now with his hearing he learns also to speak. This kind action of Christ made the people look upon him with admiration, and they said, "He hath done all



SOWING GRAIN.

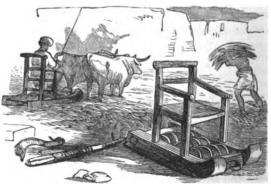
things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

In the eighth chapter is related the cure of a blind man at Bethsaida, on whose eyes he spit, and he put his hand upon them. And the man directly saw men as trees walking: he could not exactly make out their shape from a tree. He put his hands on his eyes a second time, and then he saw

clearly: teaching us, perhaps, to persevere in the use of proper means. But both in this case and in that of the deaf man, the means were only signs; they could never have cured the man if administered by a common physician; these were miracles—things not of a common kind, and showed that he who performed them could only be the Son of God.

In the last chapter we have some further particulars about Christ's resur-

rection, and his encouragement to his disciples to preach his gospel and work miracles in his name, which would prove that their message was divine, and establish the truth of it at its beginning, before all the world. They were to cast out devils, who then possessed the bodies of men, just as Jesus had cast them out; they had to speak new



RASTERN MODE OF THRESHING.

languages which they had never learnt, so as to be able to tell men of every country about the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; they were to take up serpents without being bitten or endangered by them; if any attempt

should be made to poison them, the deadly potion, which would kill other persons, should do them no harm; and if sick persons were brought to them to be cured, they should only lay their hands upon them, and they would recover. You must, however, remember that there was this great distinction between the miracles performed by Jesus and those performed by his disciples, that Jesus did all his by his own power, and without using any other

name; but the power which the disciples had was not their own, but only what he gave them, and they were to work miracles only in his name. These miracles are not now needed, because we have so many proofs left us that they were done by the first ministers, and the religion of Jesus is everywhere spread and spreading without them.

Mark further informs us more than Matthew, as he not only mentions Christ's command to his disci-



ANCIENT MODE OF BINDING.

ples, but the effect of their obeying it, and preaching the gospel to every creature; for "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Amen.\*

<sup>\*</sup> As the observance of the Christian Sabbath,—the first day of the week,—instead of the Jewish Sabbath—the seventh day, or Saturday—commenced soon after the ascension of Christ, it may be as well to explain the reason of the change here. The setting apart of one day in seven for the worship of God is older than the Hebrew nation or the Jewish religion. It dates from the creation of man; and at first was, unquestionably, the seventh day, as that was the day of the completion of the creative work. All nations, which are wholly or partially civilized, adhere to this practice, which is founded in nature, as well as in revelation; but in the lapse of time they have selected different days; so that almost every day of the week is the Sabbath of some nation. The Jews adhered to the seventh day; but the early Christians, and especially the Gentile Christians, felt that they should rather observe the first day of the week (our Sunday), since our Lord rose from the grave on that day, and his resurrection was a cardinal point in their faith. Some of the Jewish Christians, in the apostles' time, observed both days; but it was not easy to do this; and very early the Christians were distinguished from the Jews, as those who observed the first day of the week for religious worship. God requires one-seventh of our time for his service, and that day is best for it which commemorates the resurrection, and is most generally observed.

## GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE:

On, written by Luke, the companion of Paul during his most active labors and severe sufferings. It was extant at a very early period, and was received as of divine authority by the infant church from the time of its publication. Some uncert duty hangs about Luke's early history, and his position among the followers of Christ. The sanction of the apostle Paul, and the early and unanimous reception of the Gospel of Luke as divinely inspired, and its insertion into the Scripture canon, are alone sufficient proof of its heavenly origin. It furnishes many parables, discourses, miracles, and events omitted by the gospels preceding it; whilst some already recorded are omitted. The style of Luke is distinguished from that of other New Testament penmen by its pureness and classical finish, aside from its occasional use of Hebrew and Syriac idioms. It is divided into twenty-four chapters, evidently written for the instruction of Gentile Christians.

### The Birth of John the Baptist.

LUKE I.

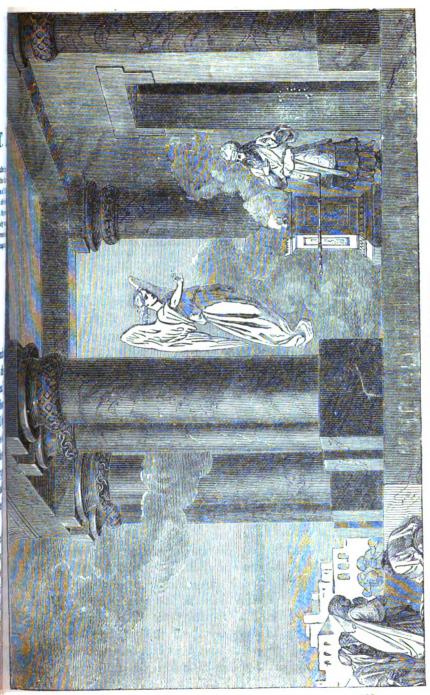
UKE is thought to have been the same mentioned by the apostle Paul in the last chapter of his epistle to the Colossians, where he speaks of "Luke the beloved physician."

This Evangelist tells us some particulars about the birth of John the Baptist, which are not mentioned by the other three. That his father was a priest of the name of Zacharias—that his wife's name was Elizabeth, and that she was sprung from the race of Aaron—that they were both very good people, and walked together in the holy ways of God—and that John

the Baptist was born when they were "well stricken in years," or quite old.

This remarkable forerunner of Christ was born, like him whom he was to honor and proclaim, in a very honorable and wonderful way. John's father, Zacharias, was burning incense in the temple, while the people "were praying without," when an angel appeared to him, and told him that his son should be born, and that he must call him John—a name which means, the grace and favor of God; and this was to show, that God's grace would be upon him in a very striking manner. He was to be separated from the world, like the ancient Nazarites (Numbers vi. 3), to drink "neither wine nor strong drink;" and God would bless his preaching, so that he should

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turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He should have the same holiness, courage, and zeal, as Elias, or Elijah, to turn the disobedient into the ways of wisdom. Zacharias, though a good man, doubted the truth of what the angel told him, and asked for some sign from which he might have better reason to believe that what he said would come to pass. The angel told him he should be dumb till the child was born, and this should be a sign, and, at the same time, a reproof for his doubting the message which God had sent.

The people wondered that Zacharias should remain so long in the temple, and when he came out he had lost his speech, as the angel had said.



THE INFANT JOHN.

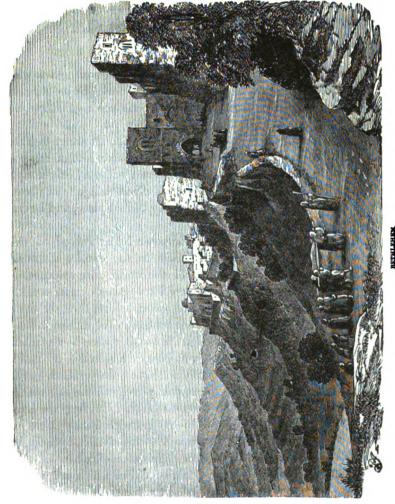
Elizabeth, his wife, at length had a son; and when he was to be circumcised at eight days old, he had his name given to him. It was usual to name the son after the father, and the friends and relations present would have had him called Zacharias, but Elizabeth having been informed in writing, by her husband, of all that had taken place,-in obedience to the command of the angel, would have him called John. The friends, however, asked the father what he would have him called; and he by signs asked for a writing-tablet, or little table made of brass, wood, or wax, used in those days,and wrote or scratched upon it, as they then did with an iron pen, "His name

is John. And they marvelled all."

No sooner had Zacharias obeyed the divine command, than his tongue was unloosed, and he spake as before.

This event, which caused so great wonder among all present, was soon reported throughout the hill country of Judea, where they dwelt; and all that feared God were filled with awe at this extraordinary child, and anxiously waited to see for what purpose he had been sent into the world.

His father, Zacharias, was then "filled with the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit inspired him to prophesy about the coming of Christ. And John grew up, but loved retirement, and went into desert and lonely places, no doubt God holding sweet communion with his spirit, or talking as it



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were with his holy mind; and so he remained till he came to proclaim Christ's coming, "preaching in the wilderness of Judea," as we have already seen in Matthew.

## The Birth and Early Days of Jesus Christ.

LUKE II.

ABOUT the same time that John the Baptist was born, Jesus was born also; John was born not more than six months before Christ. At this time Cæsar Augustus, who was the second Emperor of Rome, reigned over that empire, which had become so large from its conquests that it was called "all the world." Judea, you know, was then tributary to it, or paid taxes to the Roman Government. But a particular sort of tax was now determined on by the Emperor, which is called a poll-tax, or tax upon the head of every person; and to make sure of all the subjects in the empire, they were obliged to attend in person at an appointed place, and be enrolled, or entered in a book.

It is a remarkable fact, that the Emperor had resolved on this tax twenty-seven years before; but disturbances in the empire distracted his attention, and it was only now, when all the world were at peace, that he had time to attend to it. See here how Providence overrules all things. Had he been able to carry his purpose into effect before, then the mother of Jesus would not have been there with her husband Joseph, and Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem, but at Nazareth, where he was afterwards brought up. But if he had been born at Nazareth instead of Bethlehem, then the prophecy respecting him would not have been fulfilled, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Micah, and the second verse, and the fact that he was the true Messiah would have so far been doubtful. But here the ambitious views of a Roman Emperor to fill his coffers with money, were made to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise to his church, by bringing the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem, the place prophesied of, where he was born.

At this time one Cyrenius was governor of Syria, which was annexed to Judea, and he had the management of the tax. And every one went to his own city where he was born, or the place where his inheritance lay; and as Joseph's family sprang from David's city, and, indeed, from David himself, though he was now a poor man,—he had to go up to Bethlehem.

The city was so crowded that there was no room for the infant Saviour and his mother in the place called by us the Inn, though rather a sort of

lodging-place only. He was, therefore, born and lodged in a place for the accommodation of cattle.

Now there were some shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem, who were on the hills watching their flocks at night, to preserve them from beasts of prey, when an angel appeared to them, surrounded with a bright glory, and



told them not to be afraid, for he came not to hurt them, but to tell them the glad news, that the long-expected Saviour was born. Are multitude of other happy spirits joined the first messenger, and sang in the sweetest strains—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men"—that is, glory be to God in the highest heavens, and let all the happy spirits there praise him, for peace is now to dwell upon earth in Christ, the great peacemaker between God and guilty men, and every kind of blessing will proceed from him.

And when the angels departed, the shepherds went to Bethlehem and saw Jesus, as the messenger had exactly described him, "wrapped in swaddling clothes," or bound closely up, as was the custom in England, about a hundred years ago, instead of infants having their limbs free, as they are now, —and he was "lying in a manger." And they told every one they knew what wonderful things they had seen, and praised God for his great mercy in sending a Saviour into the world. Let us praise him too.

After this, Jesus was circumcised, and by this rite became a Jewish citizen, entitled to the covenant blessings promised to Abraham and his seed. Then

he was redeemed, another custom of the Jews; for when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians, he protected the Israelites, who, according to his command, given through Moses, had sprinkled the lintels and posts of their doors with the blood of the passover Lamb; and from that time he kept up the remembrance of this merey, by demanding the first-born to be consecrated to him; "for," said he, by Moses, "all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself." Instead of giving them up, however, to the service of the tabernacle, which was consecrating them entirely to God, as the Levites were,—"the first-born of man

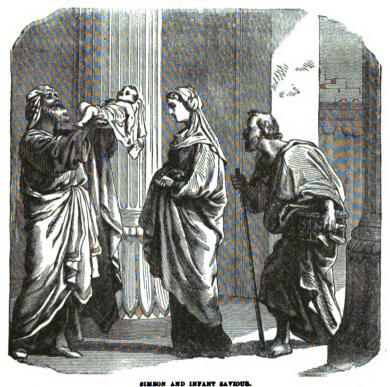


about two dollars and eighty cents of our money, which went to the service of the sanctuary. As no mention is, however, made here of the performance of this custom, it is supposed by some, that "in case of poverty, the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing." Our Lord's mother also presented her offering, a further custom usual on such an occasion. Had she been able she ought to have presented a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a dove for a sin-offering; but as she was poor, and not able to purchase a lamb, she took two turtle-doves; for so the Lord had ordered by Moses, "If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons;

might be redeemed for five shekels," or

the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." This custom was to teach the Jews, and us also, that we ought to thank God for all our mercies, and that we should express our unworthiness of them by confessing our sins—we must present the sin-offering together with the burnt-offering.

While the infant Jesus was in the temple, there came in a good old man named Simeon, who had been anxiously waiting for the coming of the Messiah; and God having shown him by his Holy Spirit that the Saviour, whom his heart desired to see, had come, he took him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to see him, and said, he could now depart in



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peace, since he had seen God's salvation. "One Anna, a prophetess," who was eighty-four years of age, also entered the temple, and "gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of" Jesus "unto all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

After these things Joseph and Mary, with the infant Saviour, "returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

And the child Jesus was brought up at Nazareth, under the care of his parents, and he waxed, or grew, "strong in spirit," giving signs of a wonderful mind, and of great piety, for "the grace of God was upon him."

When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents went up to the temple, to the feast of the passover, in remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, and he went with them. Probably this was his first Passover, and something now occurred which made the Evangelist Luke take notice of him at this age. For when the feast was over, and they returned with a number of other families that had gone for the same purpose, Jesus remained behind. His parents did not miss him till the end of the day; for as he was amiable, and beloved by all who knew him, they supposed that he was among some of their friends and acquaintances on the road; but not hearing anything of him, they became uneasy, and went back the next day to Jerusalem, and it was not till the third day that they found him. But where was he? Not in bad company, for he never stood in the way of sinners; nor was he at play, for he was of an age to learn, and he was improving his time, and

getting knowledge from the doctors of the temple. The teachers of the law were used to instruct the young there, and they were allowed to ask any questions they pleased, for the purpose of learning. Jesus had, therefore, placed himself at their feet, and was "both hearing them and asking them questions." "And



JEWISH SCROLLS USED IN TRACKING THE YOUNG.

all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

His parents wondered to find what he was about, and to see how much he was approved. And his mother gently chided him for having given them

so much alarm for his safety; but he replied, "Wist ye not," or, know ye not, "that I was about my Father's business," or, "in my Father's house?"

His mother remembered this and other sayings, and waited to see what more wonderful would happen as he should grow up to become a man.

So they returned to Nazareth, and there he lived obedient to his parents, and growing in favor "both with God and men;" his behavior, says the pious Dr. Doddridge, "being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging as to gain the favor and affection of all that were about him."

You will observe that most of these interesting facts about the birth and early days of Jesus Christ are not mentioned by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, and are only given us by Luke.

## Christ persecuted at Nazareth.

LUKE III., IV.

WE shall now glance at some other matters mentioned by this Evangelist which have not been before noticed, and run through many chapters.

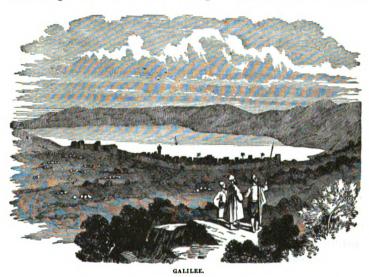
Luke tells us the exact time when John the Baptist made his first public appearance. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; and, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death, Herod Antipas, one of his sons, was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; or ruler of one-fourth of Herod's kingdom; and his brother Philip tetrarch of another fourth part, which was the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis,—the name which was now given to the tract of land on the other side of Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh; and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, a province of Syria, whose territories extended to Lebanon and Damascus, and had many Jewish inhabitants. At that time, also, Annas and Caiaphas were high-priests; not that there were two high-priests at one time, but Annas, who had been high-priest several times, had so managed as to have five of his sons and one son-in-law (Caiaphas) appointed high-priests when he was not in office himself; and he generally ruled, when they were high-priests in name.

The third chapter contains a long list of names, like the first chapter of St. Matthew. They are, however, reversed in their order, and somewhat different, but both are designed to trace up the genealogy of Jesus Christ

through its proper line—that is, to show who were his forefathers after the flesh. Matthew traces it forward from Abraham down to Joseph; and Luke traces it backwards from Joseph, the son, by adoption, of Heli, who was the brother of Jacob, the real father of Joseph, to Adam. It is supposed that Heli was the elder brother, but had no sons, and so Jacob's son was called his, according to the Jewish law. There is a tradition that Mary was the daughter of Heli, which may be true, but this genealogy does not state it.

John the Baptist having been thrown into prison by the wicked Herod. Jesus left Perea and went into Galilee.

There his fame had already spread, and he went from place to place, teaching in the synagogues, while every one admired him, and declared "they never heard such preaching in all their lives." "And he came to Nazareth," where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, "he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up for to read," for this was a constant part of the Jewish worship. "And there was delivered unto



him the book of the prophet Esaias," or Isaiah—the former being the Greek, and the latter the Hebrew for the prophet's name—just, for instance, as Louis Philippe was the French name for the king of the French, and Lewis Philip the English name for the same king. "And when he had opened the book," or unrolled the volume—for the Hebrew Scriptures were written on long pieces of parchment, fastened at each end on sticks, and so

rolled up—he found the place where it was written as in the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, and the first, second, and third verses. Having read the passage, "closed the book," and rolled it up, he "sat down," as the Jews used to do, to preach, while "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him," being very curious to know what he was going to say about a text which they knew described the Messiah. And he then discoursed upon the passage, and told them that the Scripture was that day fulfilled in their hearing.

His words were so full of grace, both in the precious truths which he uttered, and in the way in which he uttered them, that all his hearers were exceedingly surprised; but yet they could not forget that he was the son of the humble Joseph, and had been brought up at Nazareth under his care, "and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

Jesus knew what they thought. And he said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself." You have worked miracles abroad, now do so at home. "Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also in thy country." And he said, "Verily, I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country," which was another proverb, or common saying. By this he meant, that his miracles would be thrown away upon them; for they would still think from whom he was descended, and wonder at what he did as they now wondered at what he said—but they would not believe in him as the true Messiah. In the days of Elias, or Elijah, though there were many widows living in Israel, he performed the miracle of multiplying the cruse of oil for a widow of Sarepta, a city of the Gentiles; and in the time of Eliseus, or Elisha, the prophet, though there were many lepers in Israel, he cured none but Naaman, who also was a Syrian, and a heathen. So our blessed Saviour intimated, he would do miracles for and in the presence of heather rather than before them, for he knew they were so hardened that they would not believe in him.

This faithful address turned their admiration into rage, and, rising up in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, they violently cast him out of the synagogue, and out of the city too, and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong, and dash him to pieces. But Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner, that he passed through the midst of them unknown, and went away to the neighboring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time.

LUKE. 721

We have given you the latter part of this account in the words of Dr. Doddridge, because we think we cannot possibly make it more plain.

# Christ's Miracle of the Draught of Fishes.—Christ Raises the Widow's Son.—The Penitent Woman.

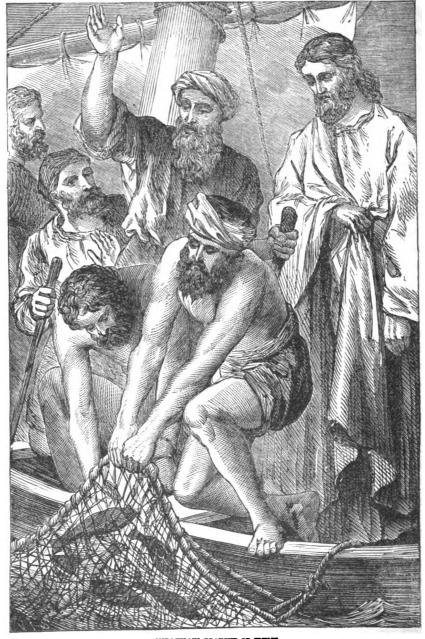
LUKE V.-IX.

WHILE our Lord was at Capernaum, we find him continually engaged in doing good, teaching in the synagogue, and instructing the people at all other opportunities. Where he went he was attended by crowds, and on one occasion they were so great that they "pressed upon him to hear the word of God, as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth." Seeing two fishing vessels near the shore he went into one of them, and, pushing off a little way from the shore, he there "sat down and taught the people out of the ship."

The fishermen who owned the vessels had been very unsuccessful in their last night's labors, for they had toiled all the night, and taken nothing. When Christ had done preaching, and feeding them with food for their souls, he now thought of their bodies also, and he desired them to launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught of fishes. They had little hope of success, but, in obedience to Christ's word, they were disposed to try. The nets were let down, and they drew them up so full of fishes that one of them brake, and the fishes taken so overloaded both the vessels that they began to sink. All were astonished; and Simon Peter. who was one of the party, with his partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, fell down on his knees, and cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;"-meaning that he was not worthy of the high honor of having Jesus on board his vessel, and of continuing in his presence. Jesus encouraged the timid man, and told him that he would employ him in a far nobler work, and that henceforth he should catch men. And so it came to pass when-if we compare the gospel to a net-he caught three thousand souls at once by his preaching, as we shall read in the Acts of the Matthew and Mark have given no more of what happened at this time than merely that Christ sat down in the ship and taught; so Luke has supplied what they omitted.

In the sixth chapter of Luke we find a beautiful discourse of our Lord's, something like that which we call the Beatitudes, in the beginning of

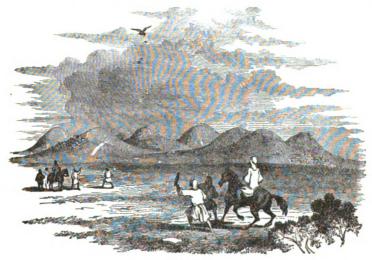
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MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

Matthew. That, however, was delivered on a mount, and this on a plain; and on examining them and comparing them together, we find them differing very much, though parts of the former discourse were repeated in this, it being another assembly.

In the seventh chapter, the Evangelist informs us of Christ's raising to life the son of the widow of Nain. He was just at the moment entering into that city, and a number of his disciples and followers were with him; and on approaching the gate he met a funeral procession. The dead person was a young man, the only son of a widow. The custom was not to enclose the body in a coffin, as with us, but to carry it on an open bier, borne on the shoulders, just merely covering the corpse with a cloth. The poor widow followed in great sorrow, weeping intensely, over her great and overwhelming loss; and who could help her? She seems to have been much respected and so was her son, by the large concourse that attended the funeral; but her friends and neighbors could only pity her. Jesus pitied her too, for he had a heart full of tenderness, as he has now; but he could do something



CITY OF NAIN.

more for her than mere mortals, he had power even over death; and so he said kindly to the widow, "Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother."

In the same chapter, we have also an account of a woman that had been a notorious sinner, who entered the house where Christ was dining with one of the Pharisees. He, as usual, was engaged in speaking the words of instruction, and she listened to him with the greatest attention. word touched her heart, and as his feet lay bare on the couch, according to custom, the tears fell in a shower from her eyes, and bathed them all over. She, perceiving this, wiped them with the tresses of her hair, which hung loose about her shoulders, and then, not thinking herself worthy to anoint his head, she kissed his feet, and poured upon them some liquid perfume. The Pharisee was surprised that a holy prophet, as Jesus professed to be, should allow a woman of such a class to approach him; and though he did not speak, Jesus knew what he thought. And he told him there were two debtors; and the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. As they were unable to pay, their creditor kindly forgave them. Now, he would ask the Pharisee, which of these was likely to love the kind creditor most? "Why," said the Pharisee, "the one who had most forgiven him." "Rightly said," answered our Lord; "now thou hast not had the sense of pardon as this woman. My words touched her heart; she has sincerely repented; her many sins are forgiven her, and she therefore loves me much."

Some think that this is the same woman that we read about in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew; but many who have carefully studied their Bible think otherwise, and for these reasons: the story told by Matthew happened in Bethany, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon the leper, and this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, and this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured was poured upon his head, and this upon his feet.

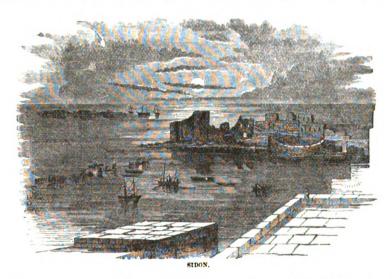
In the second verse of the eighth chapter we have mention made of "Mary called Magdalene," or Mary of Magdala, so called, just as Jesus was called Jesus of Nazareth; for Magdala was the place of residence of this Mary, as Nazareth was that of Jesus. Out of this woman our Lord cast seven evil spirits, which, I have before remarked, were suffered then in an extraordinary manner to torment the minds and bodies of men. Few persons can, without considerable reflection, form the slightest idea of the gratitude and love that must have moved the poor afflicted creatures toward Christ whose lives were converted from misery to a full degree of health and bodily comfort. Among them not the least favored by this "Physician of all physicians" was this Mary, who became a faithful follower of her Lord

# The Seventy Disciples sent forth.—The inquiring Lawyer.—The Good Samaritan.—Martha and Mary.

#### LUKE X.

In the tenth chapter we are told, that, besides the twelve apostles, whom Jesus chose to be witnesses to his truth, and to declare it to the world, he also sent forth seventy disciples, who were to go in company with each other, two one way and two another way, and so with the whole.

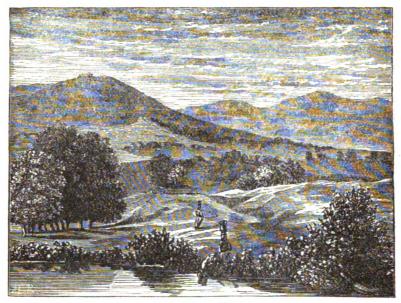
And now he mentioned the awful state of Chorazin, and Bethsaida,—cities where he had preached and performed his glorious miracles, so that the inhabitants, if they had reflected, must have seen that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, and have repented and believed his words. Instead of which they rejected him in spite of all the words he spoke, and the mighty deeds he performed, to prove that his message was divine,—and so



now they must perish. Tyre and Sidon were very wicked cities, but these were more wicked; for Tyre and Sidon had never heard nor seen such things as were made known to the people of Capernaum and Bethsaida.

Encouraged by their divine Lord, the disciples went forth; and, having gone on their circuit, they returned and told their Master of their great success, and that they had even cast out devils at the mention of his

authority. He then told them that he saw Satan, when he was, for rebellion, cast out of heaven quick as lightning, and he still foresaw that his power on earth should be destroyed. They should trample on venomous creatures, and receive no hurt, but much more should the preaching of his word break down the power which evil spirits might have over the minds



MOUNTAINS ABOUT JERICHO.

of men. Yet they were not to glory in being able to perform miracles, for they could do nothing without his aid and might; but they ought indeed to glory, when he told them that their names were "written in heaven;" and that as citizens were often enrolled, or their names written in the books of cities where they dwelt, so they were considered by him as the citizens of that happy place, as much as if such a book of their names were actually kept there.

While our Lord was talking to the seventy disciples, a lawyer—or one of the writers and expounders of the Jewish law—came to him and said, "Master," or Teacher, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord asked him what he read in his own law? And he said he found there, that he was to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. "Do this," said Jesus, "and thou shalt live." This is the grand

proof of our religion, if we truly love God, and endeavor to do the best sort of good to our neighbors. The lawyer next inquired, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus told him in the interesting parable of the Good Samaritan.

This parable begins at the thirtieth verse of this tenth chapter. I must merely tell you that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was, and still is, very dreary, and has always been a lurking-place for robbers, so that it was called the "bloody way;" that priests and Levites often travelled that road, for some thousands of them lived at Jericho, and they had frequent occasions to go to Jerusalem; that the Jews and Samaritans hated each other greatly, and so the kindness of the good Samaritan, in relieving a poor injured Jew, while even his own priest and Levite cruelly passed him by, was so much the more to be admired; and that the two pence mentioned by our Lord mean Roman pence, which were worth about seventeen cents each. We will end all we shall say about this parable by the words of our divine Lord to the lawyer; and when you meet with an enemy in distress, do not be revenged upon him, but "Go and do likewise."

This chapter closes with an account of a visit which Jesus paid to Martha and Mary, two pious sisters who lived at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem.

May my young readers all have grace to choose Mary's good part, and like her, by faith, sit at Jesus's feet and hear his word!

Jesus teaches his Disciples to pray.—The Parable of the Rich Fool.—
The waiting Servants.

#### LUKE XI., XII.

OUR blessed Saviour often retired to pray; and he taught his disciples to pray what we call the Lord's Prayer; which is repeated here, and which we have before seen in the sixth chapter of Matthew. In this, however, are not mentioned all the things we may ask; for we find many other prayers, or parts of prayer, in Scripture, as David's, and Solomon's, and Daniel's, and those contained in the epistles, especially of the apostle Paul.

And here he particularly reminds his disciples, that when they pray, they must be in earnest. And he tells them, that if any one of them happened to be out of bread, and a friend should come to see him late in the evening.



and he should be obliged to borrow some, as the Jews used to do of each other, it might happen that the house would be shut up, at which he might knock. But then, what will he do, will he go away? No, he will knock and knock again.

By this our blessed Lord would teach his disciples, and us also, that we must not pray in a hurry, but keep on knocking at the door of mercy, and earnestly ask, as if we wanted indeed to have; and if the man's friend was obliged to give him bread on account of his pressing him so much, then much more would our gracious Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him.

In the twelfth chapter Luke relates the parable of the Rich Fool, as we call it. I should like you to read it from the sixteenth to the twenty-first verse. Our Lord describes in it a rich man, who had large barns, full of what his lands had produced, and so much stock that he did not know where to put it. So he resolved to build new barns in the room of the old ones, and to make them larger. And then he thought, "How happy I shall be! I have many years yet to live, and my soul and body may be both at ease: so I will eat, drink, and be merry." But he never thought of thanking God for his wealth, or laying any of it out for his glory. So just as he fancied he had got all things to his mind, God sent death to him, and spake to his conscience by his Providence, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" How important is gratitude to God!



MASTER AND SERVANT.

In the thirty-fifth verse, our Lord says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for your Lord, when he will return from the wedding." Among the Jews, weddings took place at night. Theservants, therefore, would have to sit up for their masters, and must keep their lamps trimmed ready to light

them. If the lamps went out, it would be a sign of negligence, or that, instead of watching, they were asleep. The garments being long, like a morning gown, it was also usual to tuck them up and gird them close round the

waist, if anything needed to be quickly done. By mentioning these customs, our Lord would show the disciples and us that, as his servants, we should always be ready to meet nim at his coming. Death, at his command, will take away all that we have; but as one would watch a thief, expected to come at midnight, so ought we to be upon our watch, and then, when called to die, we shall not be taken by surprise. The faithful steward, who uses his time and talents for the divine glory, shall be richly rewarded; but he who presumes on his Lord's delaying, and does wicked things, must suffer the most dreadful consequences. As the faithless and disobedient servant was, by the Jewish people, scourged with stripes, so shall all such receive the sorest punishment, and that punishment shall be the greater for those who have been taught good things, and choose to do those that are bad.

# The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.—Of the highest Seat.—Of the lost Piece of Money.—Of the Prodigal Son.

LUKE XIII.-XXIV.

MY limits now oblige me unavoidably to pass over many things in this gospel which I should be glad to explain to you; but there are many parables given by this evangelist which we do not find in the others, and as I wish particularly to explain them, I must beg you to place your Testament before you, and refer to and read them before you read my short remarks, which I hope, by God's blessing, will be some help to you in the right understanding of them.

The first is the Barren Fig-tree (chap. xiii. 6-9).

Explanation.—The tree referred to by our Lord was a sort of white fig, which, if it did not bear fruit in three years, rarely bore any at all. This tree represented the unbelieving Jews, whom God had favored with great privileges; and sent his prophets and his Son among them, to call them to repentance; but still they had not glorified him. Still he had been patient with them, and had not punished them as they deserved, but all in vain. His kind care over them must therefore soon cease, and they be ruined like a tree cut down.

In the fourteenth chapter, from the seventh to the eleventh verse, we have the parable of the Highest Seat.

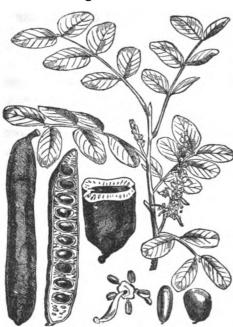
Explanation.—We have some ceremonies among us about taking a seat, but in the East the ceremonies are much greater. The Persians in par-

ticular, when invited to a feast, will wedge themselves in at the table just at the place where they suppose their rank entitles them to sit. The master of the feast may, however, raise any one as high up the table as he pleases. The Greeks have the same custom at their wedding feasts, and if any take a place higher than they ought, they are very likely to get put lower down.

Our Lord here teaches us, "that pride will have shame, and will at last have a fall."

The Prodigal Son is a most delightful parable, from the eleventh verse to the end of the fifteenth chapter.

Explanation.—This parable represents to us the Jews under the character of the eldest son; they having long been treated as God's children, while the Gentiles were not so; and how they felt themselves mortified when our blessed Lord gave them to understand that the Gentiles should be also



CAROB FRUIT (HUSKS OF PRODIGAL SON) AND LEAVES.

blessed in the Christ, the true Messiah. It shows us also how the sinner, choosing his own ways, goes afar from God, our common Father, and so from real happiness. And it points out the folly of those young persons who will break through every restraint, and have their own way, which most frequently brings on misery, and often ruin. It likewise teaches us at the greatest extreme of misery and wretchedness, not to despair, but to go to a merciful God, who will look upon our tears, will hear our supplications, and will yet receive us graciously in his tender mercies, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The sixteenth chapter begins with the Unjust Steward, and it is contained in the first eight verses.

Explanation.—"This world," says one, "is a house; heaven the roof; the stars the lights; the earth, with its fruits, the table spread; the Master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the

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goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favor in the eyes of his Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship." We see in this parable that one step of sin leads on towards another, and that he who begins to cheat will soon easily go on cheating. Roguery is, however, sooner or later discovered, and then it ends in the disgrace of the offender. Yet bad as it is to act unjustly towards man, it is worse when we consider that we cannot do wickedly towards others without breaking God's law. Such a steward must break the sacred command, "Thou shalt not steal;" and God marks those who wickedly break his righteous laws.

In the nineteenth and following verses we have the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

Explanation.—The expression, "Abraham's bosom," used here, was used

among the Jews to express heaven. We must remember that this is only a parable, and that the happy in heaven, and the wicked in hell, are too far apart ever to talk with each other.

In the seventeenth chapter is a short parable, which we call the Servant in the Field. It is to teach us



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS (Luke xv. 22).

that when we serve God ever so diligently, we have only done our duty, and have merited nothing from his hands.

In the eleventh and following verses, we read of ten lepers whom Christ cured, but out of the ten only one gave him glory for what he had done. Was not this ungrateful? But ask yourself, how many mercies have I received and have forgotten to praise God for them? "In everything give thanks," and bless the kind Giver.

The eighteenth chapter begins with the parable of the Unjust Judge, which, as the introduction of it tells us, is to teach us "that men ought always to pray and not to faint," for if the unjust judge could be wearied to do what the poor widow needed, surely God will not suffer those who love him to plead with him in vain.

The last parable that requires our notice in this book is that of the Pharisee and Publican. It is included in the tenth and following verses. The Pharisee represents those who think there is merit in their performing their religious duties, and who hope to be saved by them; while the publican represents the humble-hearted sinner, who feels no pride in praying, but only feels his need of God's mercy.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

In this gospel there is an account given of Zaccheus the publican, or tax-gatherer, who was very rich: and as Jesus was passing through Jericho, he wished much to see him. But he was a very short man, and could not see among the crowd, so he got up into a sycamore or kind of fig-tree. Jesus looked up, and called him, by name, to come down, for he meant to go with him to his house. Zaccheus was delighted at this, but many were mortified, and, no doubt, many of the Pharisees, for they said that Jesus was gone to be a guest with a sinner. Yes, Jesus Christ "came into the world to save sinners." And now the heart of Zaccheus was touched by his grace. He had been an oppressive and unjust tax-gatherer, and had wronged those of whom he had collected, to enrich himself. But he was



ARCIENT SIGNET RINGS (Luke xv. 22).

not ashamed to confess his sins, and to make recompense to those whom he had injured, and so to repent. Jesus saw that he was sincere. He knew, too, that his heart was ready to receive him as his Saviour. Zaccheus becoming blessed, would now be a blessing to others. "This day,"

said Jesus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham." Publicans, though Jews, were reckoned by them but as heathens; but now Zaccheus is blessed with faithful Abraham; like him, he would command his children and his household to walk in the ways of holy obedience. The salvation of Zaccheus was an example of Christ's design in coming into the world, "to seek and to save that which was lost."

In this gospel there are also several particulars concerning the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ which are not found in the other gospels. Among those relating to the crucifixion are: his praying for his murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" The petition of the dying thief, and his prompt pardon by the Saviour; the commending his spirit into the hands of his Father just before his death. In regard to the resurrection, we have two angels appearing to the women; Christ's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus; and to the eleven in Jerusalem. As to his ascension, Luke gives a more particular account of it, both here and in the first chapter of Acts, than any of the other Evangelists. He is also the only Evangelist who gives the command of Christ that they should remain in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit.

## Gospel According to St. John:

WEITTEN by John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the son of Zebedee, brother of James, and cousin of our Lord. His relations to the Saviour were more intimate even than those of his brother James, and of Peter. He wrote this gospel probably twenty years or more after the other gospels were in circulation. His purpose in writing it seems to have been, not to repeat the incidents of the birth and youth of Christ which the other Evangelists had already given with sufficient fulness, nor to describe many of his miracles (he mentions only eight, six of which are not found in the other gospels), or recount his parables, which had already been done; but to demonstrate to the disciples at Ephesus, and to the world, that Jesus was the Son of God. In doing this he necessarily supplies many particulars, which his more intimate intercourse with Christ enabled him to know more fully than the other Evangelists, and he gives special prominence to those teachings of Christ, in which his divine nature was asserted and demonstrated. As instances of this, his conversation with his earliest disciples, with Nicodemus, with the Samaritan woman, with the Jews after the miracle of healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, after the feeding of the five thousand, and on several other occasions at Jerusalem; at the raising of Lazarus, in the temple, and in his long and tender interview with his disciples, the evening before his betrayal, may be adduced. It was incidental to this purpose, that John gives a much fuller account of the Saviour's labors in Judge than the others, their narratives being mostly occupied with his life and labors in Galilee. His accounts of the trial, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ, are, as was becoming in the principal eye-witness of all three, more full and definite than those of either of the other Evangelists; and this also aids his main purpose—to demonstrate that "the Word was made floch and dwelt among us." This gospel has always been accepted by the church as authentic and inspired; of late years infidels and rationalistic writers have attempted to show that it was written in the second or third century after Christ, and was not genuine; but they have signally failed. It is divided into twenty-one chapters. The last two verses of the twenty-first chapter are supposed to have been added by the elders of the church at Ephesus, at whose request the gospel was written.

# Account of John the Evangelist.—John the Baptist's Testimony to Christ.

JOHN I.

HE Evangelist John was distinguished as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus loved all his disciples, but John was particularly honored by him, sat near him, and leaned upon his bosom. When Jesus shone in such glory on the "high mountain," John was one of the three disciples that saw him. He was, likewise, one of the three that saw his agony in the garden. To him also was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, when he died on the cross. History informs us that he lived till he was very old, and

while the other disciples were martyred, he was suffered to die a natural death.

As we find things in Mark and Luke which are not in Matthew, so we find things in John which are not in either of the other Evangelists.

John does not repeat the account of the birth of Jesus Christ, for that had been sufficiently done by the other three Evangelists; those who followed the first having told us about matters omitted by him, that nothing important might be wanting. And throughout this Evangelist, the history of what Jesus did is not so much related as what he said.

In the other Evangelists, we are told about the things which Jesus performed, from which we must conclude that he was more than a mere man, for no man could do the miracles which he did; and there are also expressions used at different times which point out that he was a divine person. But John treats more largely on this point, and begins his gospel by declaring that Jesus Christ is God.

Christ is here called "the Word." We will tell you why: because he it is that speaks all divine things to us; we only know the word of God through him.

He who is called "the Word" is also called God; "and the Word," says John, "was God."

He was in "the beginning;" in the beginning of time, and therefore he was from eternity, before time begun. The world was not "in the beginning," as eternity is called, but was from the beginning. The world cannot have existed as this divine Word has existed, because—as is elsewhere said of him—"he was before all things, and by him all things consist."\*

He must have been before the world, because he made the world; for John

<sup>\*</sup> It has been well said, that "while Matthew begins his genealogy of Christ with Abraham, and Luke traces it back to Adam, John goes back to 'the beginning,' before the creation of the earth or the universe. To him the creation of man seems to be a modern and recent occurrence. His genealogy dates from eternity." Our readers should also notice the similarity between the commencement of this gospel, and that of the book of Genesis. The old revelation of God's will and the new both start from "the beginning" of all things; but while the Old Testament only brings us to the hill-tops, from whence we may see the first signs of the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness—the coming of the light of the world—the new bears us up, as on angel's wings, till we can see, from the walls of the Jerusalem above, the end of all earthly things, and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the Scriptures, then, we have the whole history of God's dealings with man, past, present and future; from that remote period far back of the ages of the geologist, when the plan of salvation was first conceived in the mind of God, to that period in the future, when the earth and heaven, that now are, shall pass away, and the judgment being ended, the saints of all ages shall reign forever with their glorified Lord.



JOHN 735

adds, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Now we have seen in Genesis, that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" so that it is clear, he who is here called "THE WORD" is the same that is there called GoD.

John further says, "in him was life:" all living beings derive their life from him, and nobody can give life but God. Men can make a fine statue, but all the men in the world cannot give it life; God alone must do this. But in this divine "Word was life."

"And the Life was the Light of men." The world must have been in gross darkness without him. We could have known nothing about God and the way to heaven, but through Jesus Christ. Where he is not known, even the wisest men did and still do worship carved figures of different materials, believing them to be God.

This "light shined in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not."

"The world by wisdom knew not God." When Jesus Christ appeared, the world could not see his glory; they were even so blind, that the miracles which proved him to be no mere man could not convince them.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light -that all men through



SHOES AND SANDALS.

him might believe. He"-John-" was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The heathen have the light of reason, which God gave to them, and we have the light of revelation, or of the gospel, revealed—or made known to us—by his Holy Spirit.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now think a little on what John has here said. Though his language,

being about uncommon matters, is expressed in a way not directly to be understood on account of our being so used chiefly to common concerns; yet by a little thought it becomes very clear.

The Word, which spoke the mind of God, and was God; which made all things, and is the life and light of all men; was borne witness to by John the Baptist, who came preaching a few months before Jesus openly showed himself in his ministry; and that "Word" was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who "was made flesh," when he took our nature, and was born in Bethlehem; who "dwelt" some time in the world; whose "glory" the apostles saw—in the deeds he did, in the heavenly truths which he taught, in his transfiguration on the mount, and in his ascension to glory—of which we shall hereafter read.

John attracted much attention by his bold and singular way of preaching; and the Jews made inquiries of him if he was the Christ—the Messiah foretold by the prophets. John replied that he was not, that he was only like the forerunner of a prince, in his processions or travels, going before him and saying, "Make straight the way of the Lord;" remove every impediment out of the way to receive him; or, as a king's servants say, "Make room." Men must turn out their sins, by repenting of them, and so make room in their hearts for Jesus Christ. He, who was the Christ, was speedily coming to preach his gospel, and he was far greater than he; so much so, that he was not worthy of being honored as his servant to unloose even the straps of his sandals—or shoes without the upper leathers, as worn in the East.

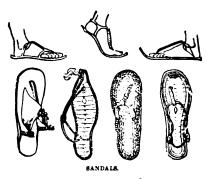
The very next day Jesus made his appearance, and John pointed to him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me." But why did John call Jesus "The Lamb of God?" Because he came into the world to die for sinners. Every morning and evening the Jews offered up a lamb in sacrifice; which sacrifice in the morning took away the guilt of the night; while that of the night took away the guilt of the morning. So God appointed, and so the Jews sacrificed. But Jesus Christ was now to be the Lamb slain. What those lambs did only in type, or as a sign, he came to do in reality, for all who by faith behold him as "the Lamb of God"—the only Lamb that can take away sin—or, in other words, the only sacrifice that can be truly effectual, and on whose account alone all the old sacrifices were of any use. The Jews would in vain have offered their lambs in sacrifice, if Jesus

Christ had not died; and the truly pious Jews believed this, and looked to something more that was to take place when the Messiah should finish his work.

John, moreover, declared that he knew nothing of Christ any more than other people—there was no scheme between them, that he should make out Christ to be the Messiah, for he declared him to be such, because he had

seen the Holy Spirit rest upon him in some extraordinary appearance, resembling a meek and innocent dove, yet, at the same time, all glorious and divine. On this account he "bare record," or declared of Christ that he was "the Son of God."

John's disciples, on hearing this testimony, wisely left John, as John wished, and followed after Jesus, and were soon joined by other disciples, whom Jesus



added to them to be witnesses of what he said and did.

After this Jesus soon gave his disciples a proof that they had not been mistaken in following him as the true Messiah. Nathaniel was invited by Philip to come to Christ, and to follow him.

Nathaniel went to Jesus, and when Jesus saw him approaching, he said, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! This was a proof that he was more than a mere man, or how should he have known anything about Nathaniel, whom he had never before seen? By this he meant, that Nathaniel did not merely pretend to serve God as an Israelite, but that he served him from his heart. There was no guile or deceit about him, but he was truly sincere.

The good man was surprised at our Lord's knowledge, and asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus said, "When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." This was probably some spot where Nathaniel retired to meditate and to pray, and where he was so shut out from the world that he knew no eye could possibly see him but the eye of God.

Nathaniel needed no further proof that Christ was the Messiah, and so he directly cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." That is, "My Master, thou art a divine person, thou art the Messiah, prophesied of to rule over Israel."

Many suppose Nathaniel to have been the same disciple which is called

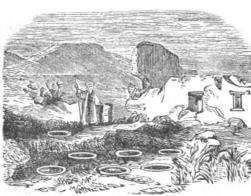
Bartholomew; because Bartholomew being called to be a disciple is never mentioned, and so they think that Nathaniel must have been the proper name of Bartholomew, for Bartholomew is not a proper name, but signifies the son of Ptolemy. The Evangelists who speak of Bartholomew never mention Nathaniel; and John, who mentions Nathaniel, never mentions Bartholomew; so that it is thought the one name is mentioned for the other; and, lastly, John seems to rank Nathaniel among the apostles, when he says, that Peter, Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathaniel, and two other disciples having gone a-fishing, Jesus showed himself to them. See the twenty-first chapter and the second verse.

### Marriage at Cana, in Galilee.

JOHN II.

WE have here an account of the first of Christ's public miracles, which he performed at a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, to which he and his disciples were invited, and his mother Mary was also there.

There being more guests than were probably at first expected, the wine was soon consumed. Mary mentioned this lack of wine to Jesus. Some think that Mary having seen him perform some miracles in private, she now



HOUSE AND WATER POTS AT CANA OF GALILEE.

expected to see him perform another by supplying the wine. And they suppose this, because Mary could have no other reason for mentioning it to him than that he should take notice of it, and because he checked her for intimating it to him, probably to induce him to work a miracle. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour"—that is, my time for working any miracle here—"is not yet come." I wish you

just to observe, by the way, that this language seems rather rude, and for us to say to any one, but especially to a mother, "Woman," would show a very great want of respect; but it was a manner of speaking which in that

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society implied no rudeness, for even princes addressed ladies of rank in the same way, and servants employed the same word to speak to their mistresses; just as people address a lady by the name of Madam, or a servant by the same word shortened into Ma'am.

His mother left him to perform his own pleasure, and told the servants just to mind what he should say if he gave them any orders.

Now there were six stone water-pots there, which had been used for water for various purposes, especially for purifying or washing the hands and feet,

and the cups and platters. These water-pots, or jars, learned men have reckoned, from the size of the measures used at that time, to have held about fifty-four gallons. "Jesus saith unto them, fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. they bare it." When the governor had tasted the wine, he was delighted with the flavor, but did not know whence it came, and he said, "Every man



ANCIENT CUPS AND WATER-JARS.

at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

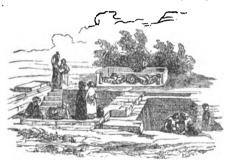
Some persons have argued from this miracle, that our Saviour approved of the use of intoxicating wines; but this is wrong, for the common wines of Palestine were not as intoxicating as our cider, and the Jewish people were very temperate; and besides we have no warrant for thinking that this wine, miraculously changed from water, by our Saviour, contained any intoxicating princip'e; though tasting like their wine, it was not the fruit of the vine, nor had it been fermented; furthermore, to draw from this an argument in favor of indulgence in intoxicating drinks, is to contradict the spirit of Christ's teachings. He requires us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, that is, avoid the indulgence of selfish and sensual appetites, and follow him. Doing this, we are in no danger of using intoxicating drinks freely.

#### Christ's Conversation with Nicodemus.

JOHN III.

In this chapter we have an interesting conversation which our Lord held with Nicodemus, one of the sect of the Pharisees, and "a ruler of the Jews;" that is, a member of the great Sanhedrim—a sort of parliament, consisting of seventy-one or seventy-two members, and consequently he was one of considerable authority in Jerusalem; though this parliament was perhaps now somewhat altered in its character, and allowed only to meddle with religious matters, the government being under the Romans.

Nicodemus being afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Jews by going to see Jesus, went to him "by night." He respectfully addressed him by



FOUNTAIN AT CANA.

the name which the Jewish Doctors bore, and called him "Rabbi," by way of distinction. He told him he believed him to be "a teacher sent from God," and that he had given proof of it by the miracles which he had wrought, and which no common person could do.

Jesus replied, that this was not enough to save him, but he must be "born again:" that is, born anew:

in other words, he must undergo as great a change in his heart, as if his old life had come to an end, and he had been born anew into the world. He must be quite a different creature from what he had been. He was born in sin, but he must be born of the Holy Spirit, or he could never enter heaven.

Nicodemus could not understand him; but Christ told him not to "marvel," or wonder, at what he said; for as the wind blew which way it would, never seen by our eyes, yet felt in its power upon our bodies, so the Divine Spirit works unseen, yet powerfully felt on the heart of the sinner, before he can be saved. So, that as by nature he cannot love God, now by grace he loves him; as by nature he practises sin, so by grace he practises holiness; as by nature he delights in folly, so by grace he delights in that which is good. This change of the mind is equal to a new birth, for none can understand it, but those who have felt it; and those who have felt it know that they are "born again," are "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

### The Woman of Samaria.—The Nobleman's Son cured.

JOHN IV.

THERE is a very pleasing little narrative in this chapter, about a woman of Samaria. She lived at a city called Sychar: Jacob formerly had purchased a piece of ground here, and gave it to his beloved son Joseph; and here was a well, which still bore the name of Jacob's well.

Jesus having occasion to pass that way on a journey, being hungry, thirsty, and fatigued, sat down by this well just at the moment the woman of Samaria went to it to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him some to drink. The woman wondered at such a request from Jesus, he being a Jew, and the Jews and Samaritans having a very bitter dislike to

each other; for the Samaritans had in various ways endeavored to injure the Jews. Jesus then said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God"—that is, that God has given his own Son to save lost men of every nation—"and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;" by this he meant the Holy Spirit's influences, which, because they are refreshing to the thirsty soul of man, in search



KAMARIAN WELL

of peace and happiness, are often compared to water.

The woman did not understand him, and asked him how he could draw water elsewhere, having neither well nor bucket at hand; and if he thought himself wiser than Jacob, who had drunk the water of that well, and left it as a valuable gift to his family.

Jesus told her that those who partook of that water would grow thirsty again, but that which he could bestow would afford full and everlasting satisfaction.

Still the woman could not comprehend his meaning, and either supposing he might know of some extraordinary water, or might be boasting of what he

could not give, she proposed putting him to the test, and said, "Sir, give me of this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus then began a conversation which convinced her that he was no common man, and told her all about her private concerns.

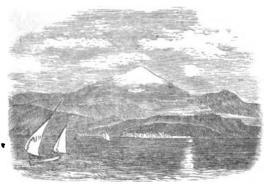
She then said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet;" and not liking to talk about some things which she had wrongly done, she asked him to inform her which place of worship was most pleasing to God, that in which the Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim, or that in which the Jews worshipped at Jerusalem.

Jesus told her that the time was now coming when no one place in particular should be more holy than another, but every spot would be the same in the sight of God in which the worship was sincere; for "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The woman further answered him, that she believed what he said was right; but the Messiah was expected soon to come, and then he would clear up all difficulties about the matter.

Imagine how surprised the woman must have been when Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am he." The disciples, however, who were gone away to buy food, now returned, and so the interview ended.

Seeing Jesus thus engaged in what appeared to be an interesting conversation with a Samaritan woman, the disciples were quite amazed; but they would not take the liberty of asking Jesus why he did so.



COUNTRY AROUND SAMARIA

In the meantime the woman, leaving her waterpot, hastened to the city, and told all her acquaintance there that she had seen the Messiah; for a person she had talked with had told her the most wonderful things; and they must come along with her, and see and hear him too.

While this was taking place the disciples begged

of Jesus to eat of the food they had brought; but he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" and his mind was so intent on his work of doing

good, which he called his meat, that he cared not about eating. The disciples, however, were often dull of understanding, and so they were now, for they thought that he had got some other meat, and wondered how he could have procured it. Jesus then explained to them his meaning: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." It wanted then four months of harvest-time, but he nevertheless had a great harvest to gather in—not of barley, but of souls. It was not a time then to eat and to drink, but to work; for the Samaritans were ready to receive him and to believe on him, and these were his precious fields, which were white and ready for harvest. And so it came to pass, for "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him."

Having been prevailed upon to stop at Sychar two days, he then proceeded on his journey into Galilee; and going again to Cana, "where he made the water wine," he performed another miracle by curing the sick son of a nobleman of Herod's court. This nobleman, hearing that Jesus was there, took a journey from Capernaum to see him, and to implore him to cure his son. Jesus knew how unbelieving the people of Capernaum were, and perhaps that he had been so among others, so he reproved him, and did not say he would cure his son, but told him, "Except ve see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman, however, urged him to return and save his child. The kind heart of Jesus could not resist the yearnings of the fond parent over his beloved son, and he said, "Ge thy way, thy son liveth." The nobleman relied on his word, and hastened home. But before he got home some of the servants were sent on the road to meet him, and to tell him the joyful news that his son was recovered; and on his inquiring at what time it took place he found it was exactly at the time which Jesus had said.

Owing to this remarkable miracle, the second which Jesus performed at Cana, not only did the nobleman believe, but all his family were convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah; that is, "THE CHRIST, the Saviour of the world."

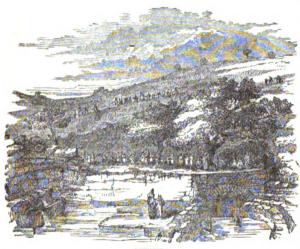
#### Christ cures the disabled Man at the Pool of Bethesda.

JOHN V.

W E now behold Jesus going, according to custom, and in obedience to the law, to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, on which occasion a vast number of persons being assembled, he had the greater opportunity of doing good.

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There was at Jerusalem a pool, which on account of some medical properties in its waters was a sort of bath, to which persons with complaints of various kinds went, in order to obtain a cure, and many had been



BETHESDA.

cured by bathing in it. It seems, however, that it was necessary they should go in just at a certain time, when the waters were agitated by an extraordinary cause.

Jesus arriving at the pool, saw a poor man there who had been disabled during no less than thirty-eight years, and having no money to pay any one to wait upon him and put him into the water whenever

it began to stir, some other person always hurried into the pool before him just at the proper moment, and obtained cure instead of himself.

Jesus talked to him about his complaint, and learning his hard lot, asked him if he would like then to be cured; and then he commanded him to take up his bed and walk. We have noticed a similar cure in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, and there told you, that the bed used was a sort of mattress, or, we may add, if you have ever seen a sailor's hammock, it was something of that kind, so that a man in health could carry it without any great inconvenience.

This happened on the Sabbath-day. Now the Jews were very strict observers of the Sabbath, and so far they were right; and they would not allow any one to carry a burden on that day. So seeing this man carrying his bed, they told him that he was breaking the Sabbath. The man then excused himself for what he was doing, and intimated as much as that he could not in that instance be doing wrong, for he who had power to cure him had certainly a right to order him to carry his bed. The poor man could not afford to lose it, he was not going to leave it by the pool, and as he did not carry it for the purpose of business, but only in a case of entire necessity;—all works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath.

These were probably Pharisees, who, guessing that it was Jesus who cured this man, endeavored thus to prejudice him, for they took every opportunity to show their hatred to our divine Lord.

The man afterwards finding that it was Jesus who had cured him, went and told the Jews, hoping, no doubt, that they would raise the fame of his divine Saviour; instead of which these wicked people only hated him the more, and sought to kill him by bringing him before their Sanhed: im or court of justice, to have him condemned for breaking the Sabbath.

As yet, however, they could only threaten to stone him or to use mob violence toward him, for the plans afterward concocted by the Pharisees and priests for his destruction had not then been matured.

#### Christ compares Himself to Bread.

JOHN VI.

SOON after the events mentioned in the last chapter, Jesus had left Jerusalem and gone into Galilee, and at Capernaum and Bethsaida, and other towns on and near the sea of Galilee, had taught and performed miracles. Withdrawing at last, to the hilly region northeast of the sea of Galilee for a short period of rest and quiet, he had been followed by a great multitude, and had taught and healed them for two or three days, finally feeding five thousand men, and many women and children, with five loaves and two small fishes, as you read in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew. The people who had been fed thought this an easy way to obtain a living, and as he could so easily work miracles, they followed him across the sea to Capernaum, whither he had gone the night after the miracle. Here he took occasion to tell them, that he knew they sought only their own gratification in following him, and that their motive was wrong; they thought to make themselves rich and great by following him, but they were mistaken.

He then told them not to labor so much for the body, as to forget to feed their souls: that to do this they must believe on him. They ungratefully replied, that if he would rain manna from heaven they would. Jesus replied, that his Father had sent them bread from heaven—the bread of life: they asked to be fed with it. Then Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life." Yes, my dear young readers, those who believe in him find life for their souls. Bread sustains the body, and Christ only can sustain the soul.

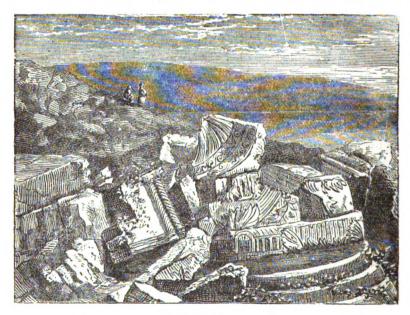
Many of the Jews were so much displeased at the spiritual character of

Christ's teachings, that though they had previously professed to be his disciples, they now "went back and walked no more with him." Jesus said to the twelve whom he had chosen, Will ye also go away? Peter replied, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Christ the Spring or Fountain of Happiness.—The Jews try to stone Christ.—Christ gives Sight to a Man born Blind.

JOHN VII.-IX.

JESUS had left the province of Judea for that of Galilee; for while he remained in Jewry, or Judea, "the Jews sought to kill him;" but he soon afterwards returned thither at the feast of tabernacles, when all the males went to Jerusalem, and when the Jews erected tents, or booths,



RUINS OF CAPERNAUM.

in which they dwelt and ate their meals, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths in the wilderness. Here Christ went into the temple and taught the people; and they wondered at the divine truths which he told them. He also repeated his reproofs to the Jews, and they still tried

to get a favorable opportunity to kill him, but they could not then do it. And in the last great and solemn day of the feast, he stood up and cried aloud, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." You understand what you have read about the woman at the well; Christ here means the same, that all true life proceeds from him; and that if any man wished then to be happy, by coming to him he could make him so; from him he could always be supplied, as a thirsty man could from an overflowing spring; he should be brimful of happiness, which he expresses by saying, that "out of his belly" should "flow rivers of living waters." Springs make rivers, and the more plentiful the springs the larger or more numerous the rivers. Thus his very heart and soul should abound with comfort and joy, always flowing like a fresh spring, and not like waters that might be dried up.

In the following chapter, a woman was brought to him who had forsaken her husband and lived with another man. This was forbidden by the laws of God, and was to be punished with death. The Jews brought this woman to Christ, that he might say whether she ought to be punished or not. Now, if he had said that she ought, they would have accused him to the Sanhedrim and to the Roman government, of taking upon himself to sit in judgment without any authority, which would have been a high crime; and if he had said she was not punishable, they would have accused him of contradicting the law of Moses. In both cases, therefore, they would have taken an advantage of him; but with his usual wonderful wisdom, he defeated their design, and instead of answering their question for his opinion, he said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Jesus knew that her accusers were as wicked as she, and this answer made them quite ashamed of themselves; so they all slunk away one by one, leaving the woman with Christ, who faithfully and tenderly admonished her to "go and sin no more."

Jesus still continued to exhort in the temple, and pointed to himself as "the light of the world," and "many believed on him." He also further reproved the Jews, who became so enraged with what he said to them, and especially when he spoke of his own eternal existence as the Son of God, that they took up stones with which some builders were repairing the temple, that they might throw them at him; but Jesus escaped again from their hands, for his work on earth was not yet done.

And as Jesus passed by from the temple, he saw a man who was born blind; and he wet some clay with his spittle, and putting it on his eyes,

commanded him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash there. The man accordingly obeyed him, "and washed, and came seeing."

Now, the putting of clay on the man's eyes could not give him sight, nor rould the washing in the fountain called Siloam; but this was done to show us that we ought never to despise the use of any means, how simple soever they may seem, if those means are divinely commanded. Praying to God, and hearing and reading the word of God, can never save our souls; but they are all means which we are commanded to use, and in using them, with a dependence upon God's grace, he is pleased to give his blessing.

This miracle attracted much notice, for the man was a public beggar, and everybody knew him, and now everybody asked, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Then the people wished to learn in what wonderful way he had got his sight; and he told them. The Pharisees also soon heard about it, and they were also very inquisitive in the matter. The man told them



TENT OR BOOTH.

the same story. Now this miracle, like that of curing the impotent man, was done on the Sabbath-day; and being still full of malice against Jesus, these wicked Pharisees said, that though Jesus might have cured the man, yet nevertheless he was a bad man, for he had broken the Sabbath. Some few, however, thought differently, and they quarrelled among themselves about it. As for the blind man, he made up his mind at once that Jesus was a prophet; for he knew that no common person could do what he had

done to his heretofore sightless eyes.

The Pharisees then sent for the man's parents, to know if he had really been born blind; or if so, whether perhaps some means had not been used to cure him, to which they might ascribe his cure rather than to Jesus. The parents were as much surprised as the Pharisees, but as they knew nothing about the cure, they were obliged to set them again inquiring of the man; and besides, had they known more about it, they were afraid to say what they thought of Jesus, for the Pharisees had threatened severely to punish any who should own that he was the true Messiah: they were liable to be put out of the synagogue, which was a sentence that did not exclude them from going to the synagogue, but was only so called. It was, however, very severe. After this sentence no one durst hire the punished

JOHN. 743

person to work, no one durst trade with him, and his goods were confiscated or taken away from him.

The Pharisees again, therefore, spoke to the man who was cured, and told him to praise God for it, and not Jesus, for he was no more than a sinner. But the man thought more highly of him. He who had opened his eyes had thrown some light of knowledge into his mind, and given him to see that he was no sinful creature who had cured him. And after disputing their opinion, he at once asked them if they would become disciples of Jesus. This was more than their malicious and proud spirits could bear, and they then reviled him and Christ too. The man, however, reasoned well with them, and said it was very strange indeed that they could not take a different view of Christ's character, for it was plain enough, that by no human power he could have opened his eyes; "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."

Being unable any longer to reason the point, they had recourse to violence, and they said, "Dost thou dare to teach us?" and so they cast him out of the synagogue.

In this pitiable condition, the Saviour sought for him and found him; and he said to him, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" that is, Dost thou expect the Messiah? Wilt thou trust in him? for in the prophecies he was called the Son of God. The poor man's heart was made ready to receive Christ's instructions, and he said, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" Jesus then told him that he himself was the Son of God, and the man worshipped him.

Christ compares himself to a Door.—Christ the Good Shepherd.

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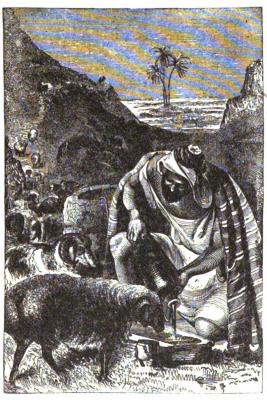
THIS is still a continuation of our Lord's conversation at the temple, at the time that the blind man received his sight; for though it is here divided into chapters, for the convenience of our reading it in smaller portions, it was not formerly so.

We find Christ here comparing himself to a door, through which it was necessary to enter properly into a sheepfold; for any one climbing over into it did so from bad designs, he was a thief and a robber. We have doors of entrance to our houses, and none but thieves and robbers think of getting into them by climbing up to the windows.

The allusion was well understood by the Jews. The sheepfold was "an

enclosure, sometimes in the manner of a building, and made of stone, and sometimes was fenced with reeds, and in it was a large door, at which the shepherd went in and out when he led in or brought out the sheep."

Now the real shepherd would always enter in by that door, that is, by the proper way, and the man who watched the door inside, and watched the sheep there, would always open the door on hearing his voice. The sheep



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

too, would directly know him, when he called them by name; for in Eastern countries the shepherds know their sheep as we know our dogs, and they give them names, and when they are called, they will come to the shepherd out of the flock, and answer to their names, as a dog we know will answer us. With the same familiarity they would also follow their shepherd, who frequently, in old times, went before them, playing some musical instrument. But if a stranger attempted to lead them, they took fright at the sound of his voice, and ran away.

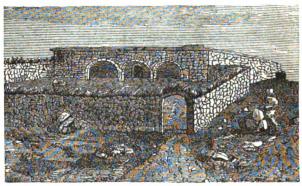
By the sheepfold Christ meant his church, to which he was the only way of entrance; and he tells the Pharisees and people, that

whoever before claimed to be the Messiah had deceived them, for he alone was the Saviour of the world; therefore he alone that went in and out of this fold, under his guidance, would find happiness and peace.

Again Christ says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." So you read that David exposed his life, and fought with wild beasts to save his father's flock. Christ our good shepherd actu-

ally gave himself up to death that his sheep might not perish, unlike the hireling, that cares not for them; and if his life is endangered by protecting them, hastily flees and leaves them to the devouring wolf.

Thus he loved his church, and gave himself for it. Among the Jews he had many sheep, whom he came to save; but not among then only, but also among the Gentiles—among the heathen, that is, the nations that were not Jews, of which we form a part. Jesus



SHEEP-FOLD

further says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

#### Christ raiseth Lazarus from the Dead.

JOHN XI.

AT a village called Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, there lived two sisters, Martha and Mary, of whom we have read in the tenth chapter of Luke. They had a brother named Lazarus, and he seems to have been an excellent man, for Jesus loved him, as he did also Martha and her sister, who were pious women.

Lazarus was taken ill, and his sisters went unto him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." But Jesus delayed going to see him, till he was dead. This he did that he might try the faith of his sisters, and see if they really believed in his divine power to raise him again; and also that he might perform another miracle, to confirm the faith of his disciples.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had lain in the grave four days; and there were many Jews at the house of his friends, comforting the bereaved sisters. As soon as Martha heard that he was coming, she hastened out to meet him, and perhaps to warn him, in case he might consider himself in danger from the Jews. Mary continued a mourner in

the house, as she did not know that Jesus had arrived, for she had a most sincere love for him.

Martha complained, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This proved how high an opinion she had of his power to save him; and she seems to have had faith enough to believe it possible that he might raise him from the dead.

After some further conversation with Jesus, Martha hastened to call her sister, who, suddenly leaving the house, was supposed by the Jews to have gone to weep over her brother's grave, and so they followed her.

As soon as Mary came to Jesus, she also said as her sister had said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" showing by this, that she had the same belief in his power. The blessed Jesus, who had all the feelings of our nature, was tenderly touched at the affecting scene, and going to his sepulchre, "Jesus wept." Oh, the kindness of his heart! Who could but love him!

Some of the Jews, who did not like him, reasoned wisely enough, and said, that since he had opened the eyes of the blind, surely he might as easily raise the dead; but they said this in order to raise a doubt whether he ever had done such a thing in reality as made the blind to see.



Jesus now went to the cave, in which, according to a custom of the Jews, the body was placed, "and a stone lay upon it," or rather upon the mouth of the cave. Jesus immediately desired the stone to be removed, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes;" having several folds of linen wrapped about him, which was another cus-

tom of those times, "and his face was bound about with a napkin," that is, round the forehead, and under the chin. Jesus then said to the persons at the grave, "Loose him, and let him go."

This miracle made many more Jews believe in Christ; but some remained so astonishingly obstinate, that still they would not believe he was the Messiah; and being filled with hatred to him because he was becoming so popular, they went and told the Pharisees, probably that they might adopt more crafty or active means to take him and put him to death.

The Pharisees were more alarmed than ever, and began seriously to think what it was most wise to do, to prevent the people from becoming the disciples of Jesus. They acknowledged that he did many miracles, and that if he proceeded in this manner, all men would believe in him. This was a reason why they themselves should have believed in him, as the promised Messiah; but it showed the blindness of their hearts that they did not.

"Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews," at or near Jerusalem; he did not teach in their streets, nor work miracles, nor appear in public company; but went and resided in a little and obscure city called Ephraim.

The Precious Ointment—Christ's Entry into Jerusalem—Some Greeks desire to see Him—The Voice from Heaven—He Washes His Disciples' Feet—More about Judas—Christ's tender Address to His Disciples.

John xII.-xIV.

E have in this twelfth chapter a more particular account of the pouring of the precious ointment of spikenard on the feet of Christ, as he reclined at the table in the house of Simon the leper, of which some notice was taken in the notes on the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew. We are told here that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who thus showed her affection for her Lord, and her gratitude for his miraculous restoration of her brother to life. We are also informed that it was Judas Iscariot who complained of the waste, and said it might have been sold for three hundred pence (about \$51), and given to the poor. What he really wanted was that the value of it should be intrusted to him, and he would have stolen it. He was so angry at our Lord's rebuke of his greedy spirit, that he immediately began to plot to betray his Master. The Pharisees now, and especially after his entry into Jerusalem, already described in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, were so much displeased at Christ's popularity among the people that they wanted to kill not only him, but Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

There were some Greeks (probably Jewish proselytes) who had come up

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to attend the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem at this time, and they came to Philip, one of the apostles, and said they wanted to see and talk with Jesus. They were, perhaps, the first fruits of that abundant harvest of Gentile souls, which were soon to be brought into the fold of Christ. This gave our dear Lord great joy in the midst of all his trials. And while he was thus rejoicing and praying in the court of the temple, there came again to him, in the presence and hearing of the people, a voice from heaven, from the excellent glory, such as had been heard before, at his baptism, and his transfiguration; and the voice said, in reply to his prayer, "Father, glorify thy name"—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But notwithstanding these repeated attestations from heaven to his divine mission, the unbelieving Pharisees and Jews would not, with a few exceptions, receive him as the Messiah. Since he would not be the temporal ruler for whom they had hoped, to free them from the power of the Romans, they cared nothing for him.

A short time before the feast of the Passover, we are told in chapter thirteenth, that Jesus, in order to teach his disciples humility, and to prevent them from having such jealousies, as they had hitherto manifested toward each other, in regard to the places they were to occupy in his kingdom, after supper, girded himself with a towel, and proceeded to wash his disciples' feet, and on their expressing surprise, he said to them: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Some excellent Christian people think that Christ intended to establish this as an ordinance to be practised by the church in all ages, and they do practise it accordingly. Others think that he meant to teach us humility, and to show us that if we were truly his disciples, we would be willing to do even humble and menial things for those who are his disciples, in his name, and for his sake.

We also learn from this chapter, in relation to the wicked traitor, that Christ pointed out Judas as his betrayer to the other disciples, by saying, in answer to the inquiry of John, "Lord, who is it?" "He it is to whom I shall give a sop" (the unleavened bread folded up and dipped into the stew, or the gravy of the meat), "when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas," who went immediately out. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was not, it is supposed, instituted until after Judas had withdrawn from the room. After Jesus had thus distributed the bread and the wine, he commenced a most touching and tender discourse

to his disciples, answering their questions and removing their doubts and fears. He told them of his death and resurrection, and of his ascension to heaven to intercede for them, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to teach and guide them. In the progress of this discourse he gave them the parable of the vine, of which we speak in the next chapter, and closed this beautiful address to them by a prayer of the deepest earnestness and the most tender pathos, with and for them, in which, after extolling the obedience and love which they had manifested and would yet manifest for him, he commended them, and all who should believe on him through their word, to the tender love and keeping of his heavenly Father. the scene in the garden of Gethsemane had already been fully described by the other evangelists, John does not dwell upon it, though himself an eyewitness of the agony of that hour; but he is more full and minute in his account of the circumstances of the arrest and trial, as well as of the fall of Peter, of the whole of which he was the only observer on the side of our Lord. He does full justice to the hesitation and unwillingness of Pilate to give judgment against the Saviour, and the consciousness of his own misdeeds, which made him afraid to be just to his prisoner.

#### The Parable of the Vine and Branches.

John xv.

CHRIST here speaks the parable of the Vine. The wine which had just been drunk at supper with his disciples afforded our divine Lord an opportunity of comparing himself with it. He had said he was Bread and Living Water to them that believed on him; and now he says, "I am the true Vine." He also compares his Father to the Husbandman.

You know that most of the wines, and all those which were drunk at this supper, were made of the fruit of the vine—that is, the grape. Christ compares himself to the vine, because he wished to show his disciples how closely by faith they were united to him. He therefore compares them to branches; and he says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Fruit is that which the tree produces of any real value. Now, in like manner as the branch united to the vine is expected to bring forth fruit, so those who are by faith united to Jesus Christ are expected to bring forth their fruits. What these fruits are we may

learn from the like expressions in other parts of the sacred Scriptures—"fruits meet for repentance—fruits unto holiness—the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus to the praise and glory of God."

Now, if we profess to belong to Christ, and do not bear these fruits, we are cut off, as the husbandman cuts off the useless or withered branch; for we have no proper union with him, and receive no more life from him, than a withered branch does from the tree. And if we belong to Christ, and really are his disciples from the heart, yet his heavenly Father purges the branches of the true vine. By purging is here meant pruning. The vine is taken much care of in the East. It is of great importance there, because it furnishes refreshing drink. Its grapes are very large indeed, and full of fine juice. But in a wild state it would not produce in this manner. All this fruitfulness is effected by cultivation; and if it have too many branches, the fruit becomes weakened; for the fewer the branches



THE HUSBANDMAN.

the more juices the root sends up into those which remain, and the stronger the fruit which they yield. For this reason the knife is freely used to cut off the superfluous branches which are not likely to bring forth good fruit.

You must recollect all this is merely the language of comparison; that is, "like as the

husbandman prunes the vine, my heavenly Father will prune you who are my disciples;" and by pruning, cleansing, or purging the vine, as it is here called, we are taught that there is much in us that requires often to be removed, even if we are Christ's real disciples; and it is chiefly by afflictions that God will prune us, so that we must not wonder when good people suffer under trials—they are the pruning-knives which purge or take away the branches that are useless.

Christ proceeds, urging that his disciples should therefore abide closely in him, living by faith on him as the Son of God, cleaving with all their hearts to him; and he tells them, "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Thus, too, we draw from him such life as is necessary to our increase here and our rejoicing hereafter. The power of his truth continually flows into the branches that abide in him, and through this fruits are continually produced.

Christ's certain Death from the Soldier piercing his Side.—His Appearances after his Resurrection.

JOHN XVI.-XXI.

WE have now gone through the principal passages of the four Evangelists: a few things only remain in John of which it may be necessary that we should take a short notice.

The first is in the nineteenth chapter, and twenty-fifth and following verses. We here learn that three Marys stood by the cross of Jesus when he was nailed upon it, and dying with his crucifixion: Mary his mother—

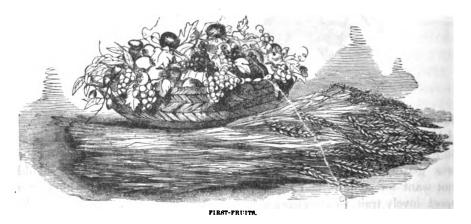


FRUIT OF THE VINE.

Mary his mother's sister, who was the wife of Cleophas—and Mary Magdalene. As for our sakes the blessed Jesus became poor, he had nothing to leave his mother; and as Joseph was without doubt now dead, and she was getting old, he was affectionately concerned for her, that she should not want for comfert and support in her last days. This, I think, is a most lovely trait in the character of Jesus. Though he was then in the deepest agony of body on the cross, he forgot his pains to think on his poor afflicted mother. He therefore commended her to the care of his beloved disciple, Joan. "Woman," said he,—and you remember that I have before told you that this name, so spoken, was a title of respect—"behold

thy son!" as much as to say, "I am going away from earth, and thou canst therefore have this body with thee no longer, but look upon John as thy son; and I know the kindness of his heart, that for my sake he will love thee, and treat thee as a son." And then he said to John, "Behold thy mother;" meaning, "behave towards her as a son; take care of her; comfort her in her old age." Some writers say that Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died; and others say that she lived longer, and removed with him to Ephesus; but the Scripture gives us no more information on this subject. Jesus knew that John loved him, and would therefore obey him; and no doubt he behaved to her as a kind son to the day of her death.

In the thirty-first and following verses of the same chapter, we also read some particulars respecting the crucifixion of the blessed Jesus which are not mentioned by the other Evangelists. "The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that Sabbath-day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." It was now the preparation time for the Sabbath-day, which at the period of the Passover was a grand festival—it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and some reckon, the day of the offering of the first-fruits. The Jews were therefore afraid of a breach of the law on that day; for, according to



the Jewish law, Deuteronomy xxi. 22, 23, the body of one hanged on a tree was not to remain all night, but to be taken down that day and buried. Among the Romans the carcasses remained to be eaten by birds; but the

Jews were taught to consider them as defiling the land, and viewed it as still more shocking for such a thing to take place on their sacred Sabbath.

Now, this circumstance led to a certain proof that Jesus had really died for us on the cross; a fact very important, for, when he rose from the grave, it might have been said that he was not then dead, and so it was no resurrection, but only a recovery from the faintness occasioned by his sufferings.

The Jews took care that the bodies should not be taken down alive. and that the criminals should not escape, so to hurry their death they used to break their legs; and this they now begged permission of Pilate to do. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side. and forthwith came there out blood and water." The soldier did this to try if he were dead or not: and at all events he seemed resolved that he would give a finishing stroke to his life. The mixture of blood and water showed that the wound was of such a nature that, had he received it at any time, it was sufficient of itself to kill him. Now his death was of the utmost importance to us. If Jesus had not died we must have perished. If he had not so died, we should, as just intimated, have had no such strong proof of his living again, which is equally important for our salvation; for now we who trust in him may rest on his word, "Because I live ve shall live also." And on these accounts the Evangelist John is very particular, not only in stating this fact, but in adding that he had it not from mere hearsay, but that he himself saw it, being near the cross at the time, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

The Evangelist John tells us of a very particular circumstance that happened after the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas would not believe what all the rest told him; and declared that nothing should satisfy him about the Saviour's resurrection short of seeing and touching him himself: "Except," said he, "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe." Eight days after this Jesus appeared among the disciples, when Thomas was with them; and he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." Thomas was astonished, and instantly confessed that it was indeed his divine Master who was alive again; and he said to him, full of love, and gratitude, and praise, "My Lord and my God!"

John also relates another appearance which took place at the Sea of Tiberias. There were then present six disciples. Peter went a fishing and not having succeeded, he and his companions were desired by Jesus, who stood unknown on the shore, to cast their net on the right side of the ship, and then they caught so many that they were unable to draw them up. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in a very particular manner, on seeing this miracle, said directly, "It is the Lord;" and Peter instantly, without waiting to get ashore in the ship, cast off his fisherman's coat, and swam ashore to meet Christ. It is said "He was naked," but this does not mean quite so, but only that he had thrown off his cumbrous upper garment; so we call a person stripped who has thrown off his coat, though he has many other garments remaining on him.

The other disciples soon after landed with the fish, and "they saw a fire



FIRE OF COALS IN THE EAST.

of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread," which Jesus had also miraculously prepared.

Jesus then invited the disciples to dine. This was "the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples." He had been often seen by individuals or small groups, but this was the third time he had showed himself to them when many of them were together.

And now he asked Peter to say if he still loved him. And he asked him three times, because he had denied him three times. He did this, perhaps, to humble Peter for his offence, and, at the same time, to show his disciples that he was yet a true disciple, whom they should not reproach, since he had forgiven

him; for after each answer he commanded him to feed his lambs and his sheep, meaning the young and the old of his sincere followers, who are called his flock.

The Evangelist in conclusion tells us, that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one," "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John simply meant, that there were many more prayers, many more conversations, many more miracles, many more kind acts of Jesus, which would have filled an immense number of volumes, had they been recorded; but as we can remember a few better than all, enough only are related that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing" we "might have life through his name."

Surely, too, we ought always to lift up our hearts and praise God, who evidently provides for our necessities, even to the least, that he has given us so much of sure and faithful testimony; so much that is comprehensive and soul-satisfying; so much that is written and adapted to the wants of every age, as well as every individual, notwithstanding that every creature differs more or less in mind, body and estate. It clearly would not answer our condition in life, our surroundings, our capabilities, our wants, to have a fuller and more extensive or elaborate revelation than has been given. And we even bear within us the consciousness that, in the infinite goodness and love of our God, we have dealt out to us with a profuse and liberal hand everything-every line and word-that it is well for us to have in regard to our souls, or their eternal concerns; indeed, all that we are able to bear. We can well fancy the All-wise Ruler moved with compassion toward us, in not being able to confide to our limited and narrow understandings more of the great and grand truths of his glorious and limitless We may, however, sit down and look out, in our imagination, into the distant realms of our future homes with rejoicing, knowing that after a few fleeting years we shall have a more complete knowledge of the life and work and teachings of Christ, as well as all his wonderful dealings with us. May this be the experience and joy of every reader of this work is the prayer of the writer.



## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:

Da, a history, by Luke, of the ministry and labors of the Apostles of Christ. This fills the position in the New Testament of a needful supplement to the Gospels, and an important and indispensable introduction to the Epistles. It begins with the ascension of the Messiah, and continues its history through about thirty years, to the end of the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, A. D. 63. Its inspired character has never been doubted in the Christian Church. The first twelve chapters are mainly devoted to the spread of the Gospel in Palestine, and to the earnest labors of Peter, James and John, and their associates, in Judsea and Samaria. From the thirteenth chapter to the close, it is almost exclusively occupied with the work of the Apostle Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles. The graphic and interesting account of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of thousands on the day of Pentecost, and, subsequently, of the zeal, and miracles performed by Peter and John, of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the conversion of Saul and of Cornelius, render it one of the most attractive books of the New Testament; and the career of the Apostle Paul, his perils, sacrifices, and triumphs, are not less entertaining and delightful. Of all the inspired writers of the New Testament, Luke possesses the greatest descriptive power, and the most lucid and finished style.

History of what the Apostles of Christ said and did immediately after his Death, Resurrection and Ascension.

ACTS I., II.

T is generally agreed by writers on Scripture, that this book was written by the Evangelist Luke. As "the former treatise," or his Gospel, was written respecting "all"—meaning a great number of things—"that Jesus began both to do and teach," as were also the treatises of Matthew, Mark, and John, so this was written to relate the "acts," or what his faithful servants did from the time of his death, and gives the history of about thirty years.

I told you in my remarks on the tenth of Matthew, that "Apostles" means persons who are sent; that is, in other language, messengers. The first disciples were Christ's messengers, as all good ministers must be, declaring to men the message of mercy, which he wished them to know, when he said, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" tell every creature the glad tidings—the good news—which I have told you.

Now we shall see how the apostles obeyed their divine Master, and what success attended their labors.

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ACTS. 763

In this chapter we learn that Jesus appeared to his disciples at different times, during forty days after his resurrection, and taught them many important "things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" or, as it means, the period of preaching the Gospel, commonly called "the Gospel Dispensation;"—that he told them to remain together at Jerusalem, and to "wait for the promise of the Father;" that they should have another comforter when he was gone—the Holy Spirit—whose comforts they should feel in their hearts;—that he should give them such power, that nothing should hinder or discourage them in preaching the Gospel in all parts of the world.

While Christ was giving these instructions, he finally left them, ascending up into heaven in a way like to that in which the prophet Elijah ascended, "and a cloud received him out of their sight." Two angels then appeared,

and as they gazed with wonder at the sky, they told them that in the same manner Jesus should again appear, meaning at the time when he shall come to judge the world. The account of his being "taken up," which is here given, is that which we commonly call the ascension, and the event



ANCIENT MESSENGERS IN THE EAST.

happened on the Mount of Olivet, a spot distant from Jerusalem "a Sabbath-day's journey," or the distance allowed for a Jew to walk on a Sabbath-day, which was a mile, or perhaps something less.

After Jesus had ascended to heaven, his disciples assembled together in "an upper room," which was a retired place, where they might pray, having those women who had so much loved the Saviour joined with them.

Peter now observed to those that were met together, that one of the twelve disciples being deficient, from the treachery of Judas, it was desirable to choose another, and they therefore cast lots to know who they should choose: "and the lot fell upon Matthias."

In mentioning Judas, Peter says, that he purchased a field with the money which had been given him by the Chief Priests, "and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Now we know that he returned the money to the Chief Priests, so that he could not have paid for the field; but as they afterwards purchased a field with the money, it could be said that he bought it; this field was on the brow





764

of the precipice which extended to the deep valley of Hinnom, southwest of the city; and Judas, hanging himself there, fell into that deep and foul ravine.

The day of Pentecost was the fifteenth and last day from the day on which the Jews offered the first-fruits of their harvest, as a token of gratitude to God; and that day of offering the fruits was the second day of the feast of the Passover. On that day the disciples of Jesus were all met together "in one place;" and while they were so met, a singular sound filled the house, as though a wind were rushing through it, and flames, like fire, appeared on each of those assembled, having the shape of tongues, cloven, or divided. This was a miraculous token, that "the Holy Ghost," whose divine influences Jesus had promised, to comfort, strengthen, and instruct his disciples, had now come among them, in proof of which they "began to speak with other tongues" than their own.

Now, you must know, that it requires some time, and labor, and diligence, to learn different languages, but these disciples spoke several languages at once; and the reason of this was, that they might directly tell people of different countries who came to Jerusalem, about all the great things that Jesus had done, and what had happened to him, that sinners of mankind, in every country, might be saved.

At this time a great number of Jews, who inhabited various countries of the world, as they do now—though the nation was not then entirely dispersed—had visited Jerusalem, most likely to be present at the passover; and hearing of the wonderful event which had taken place, they ran to the house where the disciples were, and there was universal astonishment when they found that these disciples could speak the languages of all the countries whence they had come. Some of the people of Jerusalem, who hated Christ and his disciples, mocked, and said that they were drunk. were more like drunken men themselves, who could suppose that men could speak other languages than their own merely because they were tipsy; and if they had not been full of prejudice and hatred against Christ and his disciples, they would never have suggested such a reason for this miraculous gift. The apostle Peter, who from this time, as the oldest, and perhaps the most thoroughly instructed in his Master's will and purposes, took the lead of the apostolic band, thought it best to preach to the multitude. And "when they heard it, they were pricked in their heart;" that is, "the word of God entered into them, which cut and laid open their hearts, and the sin and wickedness of them;" and they felt as you have perhaps felt when you have been detected in doing something you ought not to have done, and perhaps something very bad indeed; for shame and guilt pierce and wound the soul, as a sword cuts and pains the body. And they "said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them they must "repent;" that is, their minds must be changed; they must seek forgiveness and pardon from Christ for the wickedness they had done, and they must be "baptized," as a proof that they had embraced the religion of Jesus, and then the Holy Ghost would work in their hears, and make them both holy and happy.

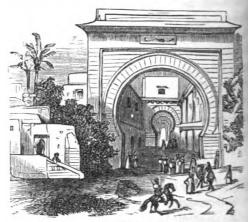
In the course of the day no less than "three thousand souls" repented and believed, from the preaching of Peter, and were baptized.

The lame Man restored at the Gate of the Temple.—Peter and John taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim.

ACTS III., IV.

WE have here the account of a miracle wrought by the apostles Peter and John. We are told that they went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and there they saw a poor man who was born lame, and who was daily carried to the gate of the temple which was called "Beautiful," on

account of its being more handsome than the other gates. As he was unable to work, here he was to be seen begging alms of the charitable. As the two apostles entered, he asked them also to give him something. Little did he expect what he should get by that supplication. "Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand,



BEAUTIFUL GATE.

and lifted him up: and immediately his ankle-bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into temple, walking and leaping, and praising God."

The cure of the man drew together a great number of people, all wondering at what they saw; and Peter again embraced the opportunity of preaching a sermon to them, in which he told them the same truths as before, and urged them to repent of their sins, and to submit to Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, that Almighty Saviour, by whose power he had performed this cure.

The Jewish priests, who had opposed Christ, now tried to stop the mouths of his apostles, so they laid hold of them to prevent them from preaching again; and well might they fear the success of the apostles, for under this sermon no less than five thousand souls were converted!

The next day the apostles, with the man that was cured, were taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, where were assembled together their rulers, elders, scribes, and priests; and the apostles were asked by what power they had cured the man, whether by the help of the devil, as they thought, or by the help of God. At this moment the Holy Ghost filled Peter's heart with the greatest courage, and he again preached, having the rulers and priests to hear him. These were not converted, but nevertheless they were struck with wonder at "the boldness of Peter and John," for they recollected them as having been among the timid disciples of Jesus, who once all forsook him and fled.

The apostles being set free, again joined their brethren, and told them of their treatment and escape. Then they all united together in prayer to God, to give them courage still to speak his word, and to enable them to show it was his word by performing more miracles. And God gave them another sign as on the day of Pentecost,—a mighty shaking of the place where they were assembled, such as when a house is shaken with the wind, and by this sign they knew that the Holy Ghost would give them new power and energy, which immediately was the case, "and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Ananias and Sapphira struck dead for lying.—The Apostles Peter and John thrown into Prison.—Released by an Angel.

Acts v.

THERE were now above eight thousand Christians; and, as they were liable to great afflictions and persecutions, in embracing the faith of Christ, they all readily agreed to sell their possessions, and to put all their

money into one common stock, and so help each other, just as they might stand in need.

But a man named Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, while professing to do as the rest did, gave only a part, and slily kept back the rest.

Liars think they cannot be found out; but God can always find them out. And so he did here. It was revealed to Peter that Ananias had kept back part of his money; and he told Ananias that Satan had got possessior of his heart, to do so wicked a thing.

Ananias was terrified at this discovery; he was convicted of his sin, and instantly fell down dead.

In about three hours after this Sapphira made her appearance, and, not



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

having heard of the death of her husband, she expected to see him among the disciples of Christ, received as one of his sincere and liberal followers. Peter asked her for how much the land was sold, for which Ananias kept back the money. And she told him the same lie as Ananias, having agreed with him to deceive the apostles. Peter then rebuked her for daring to tempt or try the Spirit of the Lord, by seeing if it were not possible to conceal from his inspired apostles so base an action; and he said, "Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall

the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead; and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." And well might they fear. These were awful examples of the hatred which God has to lying. for Peter could not have killed Ananias and Sapphira merely by what he said: it was God's hand that killed them.

ACTS. 769

The apostles continued working miracles and preaching, "and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The people also, learning what cures the apostles performed in the name of Jesus, thronged to them with their sick, and were happy if they could get within reach of the shadow only of Peter's body, supposing that there must be some virtue in it, not understanding how he cured only by the power of the blessed Jesus.

The Jewish rulers were now greatly enraged, that after they had so strongly commanded the apostles to be quiet, they still continued preaching about Christ, and working miracles in his name; and they "laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison," where they put their malefactors, as if they had done the very worst deeds, instead of

kindly curing the sick and the lame.

But God sent an angel, who opened the prison-door at night, and set the apostles free, desiring them to go to the temple, and preach again to the people.

All that now happened to the apostles our Lord had foretold, as Matthew informs us in the tenth chapter of



CHAINED TO A GUARD IN THE PRISON.

his gospel: "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake." The apostles, therefore, rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Thus, from morning to night, every day, they continued at the work of preaching, and embraced every opportunity to teach, even in the temple itself, as well as from house to house. They made it the great business of their lives to exhibit Jesus to the people as the promised Messiah; also to clear from their spiritual eyes, beclouded by the forms and ceremonies and customs of the fathers, all that was dark and incomprehensible, so that they might appropriate him to their souls.

# The Death of Stephen.—Saul of Tarsus.—Persecution of the Christians. —Simon Magus.—Philip and the Eunuch.

Acts vi.-viii.

In the sixth chapter we are told that the disciples chose seven men out of their number to take care of the poor among them, that they should not be overlooked; Stephen, who was afterwards martyred, was among those now chosen. It is one beautiful feature of Christianity that it never overlooks the poor.

The disciples of Jesus still continued to increase in numbers, and even many of the priests were at last converted.

Stephen was a man very "full of faith," and he "did great wonders and miracles among the people." Like Peter and John, therefore, he was dragged before the council; and as there was no crime committed by him to condemn him, false witnesses were procured; and wicked men, for the sake of a reward, made up a story against him, that he had spoken blasphemous words against the temple and the law. Stephen was quite calm and happy; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." The good man made a noble reply, and boldly told them of their wickedness, and of that of their fathers before them. He charged them with being "the betravers and murderers" of Christ, and cut them so to the heart with what he said, that in their rage they, like a pack of dogs, "gnashed on him with their teeth." thrusting him out of the city, they stoned him, while he called upon God, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And while they yet stoned him, he kneeled and prayed for his persecutors, and then "fell asleep." asleep." Stephen was amidst a shower of stones, and he fell asleep! Saints when they die fall asleep. When we sleep we rest; and death to them is no punishment, but only a rest. Stephen was the first Christian martyr.

And here begins the history of the most extraordinary man among all the apostles. At this time he was "a young man, whose name was Saul," and who was an enemy to Jesus, and took care of the clothes of the false witnesses that had pulled them off, that they might the better stone the pious Stephen. Indeed he "was consenting to his death," which means here, that he even "took pleasure" in it. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,"

fleeing wherever they could to escape the fury of their enemies: the apostles only remained at Jerusalem, still to bear witness in behalf of Jesus. Among the persecutors none were more active than this Saul; for "he made havoe of the church," falling on them like a wild beast on his prey, "entering into every house, and haling men and women," that is, dragging them by force, "committed them to prison."

This persecution, however, turned out for good. Instead of checking the

progress of the religion of Jesus, it only spread it abroad the more: for the driven disciples being from Jerusalem, "went everywhere preaching the word." And among those who preached with very great success was Philip, one of the seven who went to Samaria, and preached Christ unto the people. And they all with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he "And there wrought. was great joy in that city."

And there was a man at Samaria named Simon, whom we are accustomed to call Simon Magus, that



PRACTISING THE CUNNING ARTS.

is, Simon the magician or conjurer; because he used cunning arts like the magicians of Egypt. This man "bewitched," or astonished the people with his tricks, and they thought he was some most wonderful person. But when they heard the wonderful things about Jesus which Philip had to tell, and saw how he cured the lame and the sick, and others, they would no longer believe in Simon Magus, but became disciples of Jesus; and Simon professed to be a disciple also.

The apostles at Jerusalem being informed of the great things doing at Samaria, sent Peter and John to assist Philip in his work. And they laid their hands on some of the disciples, as a sign of imploring the Holy Spirit to give them peculiar courage and abilities, that they might become fellow-laborers in their great work; and the Holy Ghost gave them extraordinary powers, as had been done to the disciples assembled on the day of Pentecost. Simon seeing this, and having been left out of the number, offered Peter money if he would enable him to do the wonderful things



SOOTHSAYERS

which he saw the others could do, that is, speak in different tongues, and heal diseases, and the like. Here he showed that his heart was awfully darkened, or he must have seen that no money could purchase such power, and that it could only have been given from above. This Peter told him, and exhorted him to repent, and pray God to forgive him for such wicked thoughts. It is most likely that Simon Magus, seeing

he had lost his chance of being popular, and of making money by his old tricks, wished now to attain the same ends by means of the gifts of speaking and healing, having no design to glorify Jesus by what he might say and do; and it is generally believed that he died a bad man, for we never read of his heart having been changed.

But we have directly after a more pleasing account in the narrative of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip having been ordered by an angel to take a journey on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, was travelling in obedience to the divine command, when he met with an Ethiopian dignitary, an officer "of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship." He was now returning, and was sitting reading in his chariot. Philip was inclined, by a peculiar impression made upon his mind by the Spirit of God, to hold conversation with this eunuch; and, approaching his chariot, he found that he was reading aloud from the prophet Esaias, that is, Isaiah—the former

being the Greek, and the latter the Hebrew name for the prophet. And Philip said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Now the eunuch, though riding in a chariot, was a very humble man; and sensible that he needed to learn all that he could, especially about the Saviour, he replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." And he was reading the prophecy about the blessed Jesus being led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer—but he was at a loss to know whether it spoke about the prophet, or about any other person. Philip then explained it to him, and preached about Jesus. No doubt he told him, that the prophet was setting forth the purity, innocency, meekness, and patience, of the suffering Jesus-"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;"-and showed him how he was led to be crucified, and so shed his precious blood for us, as the Lamb's blood was shed upon the Jewish altars. No doubt he also told him of the command given to the disciples, to go and teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For, on arriving where there was some water, he desired to be baptized, and declared his firm belief that Jesus was the son of God, and, therefore, he was willing to become one of his disciples; so Philip baptized him. Philip was now miraculously removed from his presence all on a sudden, a circumstance which must have satisfied the eunuch's mind that he was no inferior person, but a messenger sent from God, to teach him the way of salvation. So the eunuch went on homewards, rejoicing that he had been favored with such news of salvation, and had found the knowledge of Christ crucified. The Scripture does not tell us, but some respectable ancient writers do, that this cunuch founded a flourishing church in his own country. Those who know Christ will try to make others know him also.

Remarkable Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.—Peter cures Eneas of Palsy.— Raises Dorcas to Life.

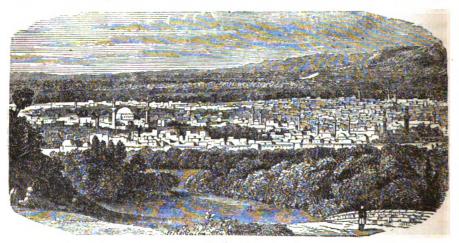
Acrs ix.

WE shall now hear more about Saul of Tarsus, whose history has been interrupted by noticing the persecutions of the Christians, and the labors of Philip.

"Not satisfied with the murder of Stephen, and with the havoe he made

at Jerusalem," we learn here, that Saul was "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and he therefore went to the High Priest, and begged him to give him authority to go to Damascus, the capital city of Syria, that he might there search out for the Christians, and take all that he could find bound to Jerusalem.

But the grace of God stopped him, as it has many a wicked person, in his career. "As he journeyed, he came near to Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Now, you must observe, that Saul did not know Jesus; that Jesus was in heaven, and therefore he could not persecute him in person; but Jesus so loves those who love him, that in persecuting his sincere followers, he felt the cruelty of Saul as if it had been inflicted upon himself. And Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," or goads, as a restless bullock would against the spiked stick with which his driver would urgs



DAMASCUS

him on with his work in the plough. Saul's spirit was immediately subdued; and he who had made others tremble now trembled himself, and said, like a submissive servant, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The great light which had flashed upon him from heaven had blinded his eyes, and he was obliged to be led into Damascus as a blind person; and there, during

three days, he could neither see, nor eat, nor drink. The Lord, now seeing Saul humbled and praying for mercy, commanded a disciple of the name of Ananias to search him out, and to speak comfortable things to him. Ananias knew what a bitter persecutor Saul was, and was afraid to go near him, but the Lord told him that he was one of his chosen vessels; and as men put treasure into urns, and such things, so he would put the treasures of his grace into the heart of Saul, and make him one of his most eminent ministers. So Ananias went to the house where Saul was, and restored him to sight as he was commanded to do, and the Holy Ghost gave sight at the same time to his before darkened mind, and taught him everything that could qualify him to preach Christ to sinners, and show them how he was a Saviour. And Saul was at the same time baptized as another disciple of Christ. Instead of persecuting the disciples, Saul now joined himself to them, and remained a while with them at Damascus. And there "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

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The Jews now tried to kill him, as he had tried to kill others, and they hid themselves in certain places, to put him to death by suddenly falling upon him; and they watched the gates of Damascus night and day, that he might not escape. However, the disciples, notwithstanding their vigilance, managed to get him out of the city; for the house of one being built on the city wall, he was let down by a basket from a back window, and so got away from the city without passing through either of the gates.

Saul then went to Jerusalem; but his name was so terrifying there as a persecutor, that when he offered to unite with the disciples they were all afraid of him. They most likely supposed that he only professed to be a Christian that he might the better come at their secrets, and so play the part of a spy, and inform against them, and get them to be imprisoned and put to death. At length Barnabas told the disciples not to fear, and what wonderful things had happened to Saul, "and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

At Jerusalem also the new apostle met with the most violent enemies, who seemed the more enraged against him, because he was a deserter from their ranks. Here the Grecians, as they are called, or Jews, that used the Greek language, and not Greeks, who were heathen, "went about to slay him," and he found no rest till he went to his own city of Tarsus. After this the churches were allowed for some time to enjoy a little rest.

We now leave Saul at Tarsus, and return to notice what Peter was doing. We are told that he paid a visit "to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."

Lydda, where Peter went, was a city about thirty miles from Jerusalem. Here Peter worked another miracle in the name of Jesus, and cured a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy

We are next informed about a good woman, whose name you may often have heard mentioned, because her memory is held in great repute on account of her being very charitable. Her name was Tabitha, in the Syriac language, and means a roe; and because a roe in the Greek is called Dorcas, that was the name which she bore among the Jews that spoke Greek. She lived at Joppa, a town now called Jaffa. This excellent woman died, and was laid out. Peter being then at Lydda, which was near Joppa, the disciples sent to him to tell him of their grief, and no doubt with



a view to his restoring her to life. Peter hastened to Joppa, and there he found the dead body in an upper chamber, "and all widows" to whom Dorcas had been very kind and charitable, "stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." It is from this circumstance that we call

some of our societies for giving clothes to the poor—Dorcas societies.

Peter ordered every one of the widows to leave the room, that he might, in a more undisturbed way, kneel down and pray to God; and having done so, he said to the dead body, "Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows he presented her alive."

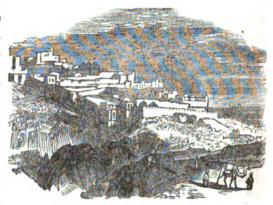
These miracles caused many more to believe in Jesus: and Peter continued for some time at Joppa, with one Simon a tanner, no doubt busily engaged in following up these miracles and conversions, by exhorting the disciples to continue firm in their attachment to Jesus, from which they would be liable to be shaken by future persecutions, which were to be expected from the envious Jews.

#### Cornelius's Dream.—Peter's Vision.

ACTS X., XI.

THERE was a man living at Cesarea, commonly called Cesarea Philippi, on the borders of Syria, whose name was Cornelius, and he was a centurion, that is, an officer commanding a hundred men, who were Italians, subject to the Roman government. This man was very pious and charit-

able, and particularly fond of praying to God. Now while he was devoutly engaged in one of the hours of prayer, an angel of God spoke to him in a vision; that is, he saw the angel, not in a dream by night, but in broad day; and the angel said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God;" meaning, that the prayers which he had put up in faith, for himself and



JOPPA, FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

family, and the charitable actions he had performed from a principle of love, were like sacrifices upon the altar, which ascended to God with acceptance. And he desired Cornelius to send men to Simon the tanner's house at Joppa, where Peter resided, and Peter would teach him about those great things which he was desirous of learning. So he sent two of his servants, and a pious soldier, to make inquiries for him at Joppa; these were, no doubt, all concerned faithfully to do the business about which Cornelius had informed them.

These messengers went to Joppa on the next day after the vision of Cornelius, and reached it at another hour of prayer used among the Jews, and Peter at that moment was praying, and fell into a trance; that is, he lost all sense of what was doing here, and felt as if he were a happy spirit, departed from the body; and he saw heaven opened, and a large sheet let down to earth and spread out before him as a table-cloth, in which were wild beasts and creeping things, as well as tame beasts and fowls; and a voice desired him to kill and eat. Peter, who had strictly observed the

Jewish law, had never eaten anything which it forbade and called unclean, and he hesitated to touch the offered food. The voice then said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This vision seems to have been repeated three times, to impress his mind the more strongly. Peter, on coming to himself, could not think what all this could mean; but while he was thinking upon it, the messengers from Cornelius arrived at his door, and he was urged by a secret impression of God's Spirit to meet them, and go with them.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, the good man had assembled his relatives and friends, supposing that some blessing from God would attend this extraordinary meeting, and he wished them to enjoy it as well as himself.

On seeing Peter, Cornelius fell at his feet "and worshipped him," or paid him reverence. He was not a foolish heathen, who paid him worship



CERAREA

as if he had been a god, but he paid him very high respect as a servant of God, sent to instruct him. Peter, however, thought that he paid him more reverence than he ought, and fearing that he might rob Christ of the honor which was really due to him, and none other, he

"took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

And now Peter saw the plain meaning of the sheet, with the uncleau creatures of which he was to eat. This was a sign to teach him, that though he was a Jew, yet he was now to unite with those who would believe in Christ of all nations; and he said to the company, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Cornelius now told Peter for what reason he had sent for him, and that his little company were assembled to hear from him any words which God might speak through his lips.

Peter then preached to this Gentile company the same truths which he had preached to the Jews, and encouraged them to believe in Jesus as a

Saviour, assuring them, that "in every nation he that feareth" God, "and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;" and that whosoever believed in Jesus should receive remission, or enjoy the putting away of their sins, so that they should not be brought against them in the day of judgment.

While this honored apostle was preaching, the Holy Ghost also came upon these Gentiles, as on the Jews assembled on the day of Pentecost. They also were now filled with zeal for the honor of Christ, and could speak in tongues they had never learned, so as to explain to all they might meet, of any country, the great things about their salvation. "They of the circumcision," that is, the Jews who were present, were astonished; for they had no notion that the Gentiles would receive the Spirit, but thought that this blessing was to belong to the Jews only. These persons having received the Spirit were also baptized, to show that they were the disciples of Christ.

The apostles, who were scattered at the time of the persecution of Stephen, still continued "preaching the word;" but they confined their labors to the Jews only, and to the Grecians, or Jews which spake the Greek language, commonly called Hellenist Jews, which means Grecian Jews. These apostles preached at Phenice, Cyprus, Antioch, and elsewhere: "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." And Barnabas being sent from Jerusalem, paid a visit to the new disciples at Antioch, where he was much delighted, for he "saw the grace of God," in its holy and happy



ANTIOCH

effects, in the lives and dispositions of the people, and this made him "glad;" and while he preached, "much people" were also "added unto the Lord." Barnabas also got Saul of Tarsus to help him, and they labored together for a whole year, "and taught much people."

It was at this time that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

The eleventh chapter closes by telling us about a kind act of the Christians at Antioch, in sending needed comforts to their brethren in Judea. At this time Agabus, who was endowed with the spirit of prophecy, fore-told that a famine would shortly take place all over the world, "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar," a Roman emperor. The Christians at Antioch, which was a fine city in Syria, had some reason to believe that their brethren at Jerusalem would suffer much from this famine, and so they made no hesitation, but sent them what money they could spare to meet their wants, when the time of need should come.

## The Apostie Peter's Imprisonment, and miraculous Escape.—Herod's miserable Death.

ACTS XII.

THE Herods were all bad men. Herod the Great slew the infants at Bethlehem, Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist, and Herod Agrippa "killed James, the brother of John, with the sword," which was



one of the modes of putting to death among the Jews that was considered very disgraceful, and was especially inflicted on those who deceived the people.

As he saw that the wicked Jews were pleased at his murder of one of our

blessed Lord's apostles, he proceeded next to persecute Peter, and by his orders this faithful servant of Christ was thrown into prison, and carefully guarded by "four quaternions of soldiers," that is, sixteen—a quaternion consisting of four; and these quaternions relieved each other's guard, and so watched him by turns, night and day. It was impossible that he could escape but by some miracle, for his hands were chained, and when he slept at night, he had two soldiers lying by him, one on each side, and the chain on each hand was fastened to a hand of each soldier.

But nothing can withstand the power of God; and when the Christians met together to pray for Peter's deliverance, God heard their prayers, and sent his angel to set him free. The very night that this happened was to have been Peter's last night in prison; for on the next morning, Herod intended to have exposed him to the people, and to have put him to death, as he did James. When the angel appeared surrounded with brightness, which illuminated the prison, he awoke Peter by touching his side, and raising him up, "his chains fell from off his hands;" and having put on his girdle and his sandals, he followed the angel out of the prison. All this was so sudden and surprising, that Peter scarcely believed it was real, and thought he must be dreaming. When they had passed the first and second ward, or watch, they had to escape through the strongest gate of the prison, a gate made of iron, and through which they could enter directly into the city. This gate opened of its own accord, and so Peter escaped from the hands of his enemies. What was the state of the guards during this time is not said: perhaps a deep sleep came over them, or their sight was darkened so much as to be unable clearly to distinguish objects at the moment.

The angel having left Peter in the street, he began to recover from his astonishment, and comforted himself that God had really interposed to save him. Then, without loss of time, he hastened to his fellow-Christians, who were just then met together for prayer at the house of "Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." Having knocked for admission, a young woman named Rhoda, or Rose—for that is the meaning of Rhoda—coming to the gate, asked from within who was there, and on hearing Peter's voice, was so overcome with joy, that she ran in and told the company instead of stopping to let him in. Though they were praying, and no doubt praying for his release, yet they could hardly believe that it happened so soon, and they said to the young woman, "Thou art mad;" and when she assured them it was true that Peter was at the gate, they said,

"It is his angel:" they thought it was some heavenly messenger that had assumed his form to bring them some news about him.

As Peter continued knocking, they went and opened the door, and, to their astonishment, they saw Peter himself, and he then told them how he had escaped.

When daylight came, Peter being missed from the prison, the soldiers were all in alarm; and Herod, on being told what had happened, was so enraged, that he ordered the poor soldiers to be put to death, or executed, as we say, for their negligence.

Herod now left Jerusalem, and went on a journey to Cesarea, a city about fifty-five miles from it. Here he was visited by some persons of importance, who were sent from the people of Tyre and Sidon, to reconcile him after some offence which he had taken, and on account of which they feared he would make war against them. This would have been ruin to them, for they lived by merchandise, which they could not then so extensively sell; and as they were not accustomed to the labors of the field, they were also "nourished by the king's country;" that is, received their food from it, especially their corn. Herod appointed a day to receive the supplicants, as



HEROD RECEIVING SUPPLICANTS.

he sat on his throne, and being very splendidly dressed with robes which Josephus, the Jewish historian, says were richly worked with silver, that sparkled brilliantly in the sun, he delivered a speech to the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, in the presence of a great multitude of people. The foolish people, in order to compliment the king, cried out, " It is the voice of a god, and not of a

man." The more foolish king was delighted with this praise, and instead of reproving them for their blasphemy, in so extolling a poor dying mortal

like themselves, he silently heard and rejoiced in their flattery. But God can punish kings that offend him, as well as poor men; and while this impious king was setting himself up for a god, an angel secretly smote him "because he gave not God the glory" in reproving the profane people, "and he was eaten of worms," and died.

#### The Travels, Sufferings, and Success of Paul and Barnabas.

Acrs xIII., xIV.

IN this chapter we find Barnabas and Paul travelling about together to preach the gospel. They went to Seleucia, a city of Syria, and thence "they sailed to Cyprus," an island in the Mediterranean Sea. There they visited Salamis, a chief city of Cyprus; and thence they proceeded to Paphos, on the same island.

We are here told that Saul was also called Paul. It was common to have two names of these kinds; for Saul was the Hebrew name by which this apostle was known among the Jews, but Paul was his Roman name.

From Paphos they next "came to Perga, in Pamphylia," a country in Asia, of which Perga was the chief city; and from Perga "they came to Antioch in Pisidia," so called to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria. Here they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and were invited by the rulers to speak; and Paul preached a sermon to the people, the design of which was to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed one of God, for whom the Jews had long looked; that he was of the seed of David, as foretold by the prophets; that though he had died, he had also risen again, and that now they were come to preach salvation in his name.

The people were so struck with this sermon that they wanted to have another on the next Sabbath; but the rulers would not allow of it, for they were jealous because the preacher had attracted so much attention. Then Paul and Barnabas told them that since they had refused to hear any more about Christ, they should carry the glad tidings to the Gentiles or heathen, which the heathen, at Antioch, were glad to learn; and many of them heard the holy preachers and believed.

The Jews then raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and got some women who had gained fame as devout women from their attention to the laws of their religion, and who were also of rich families, to help them in driving these servants of Christ out of the city. So they shook the dust

off their feet, as Christ had told them to do if their message was not received in any place, as a sign of displeasure against it, and they "came unto Iconium," another place on the borders of the country.

At Iconium they again went into the Jews' synagogue, and "a great multitude," both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed their divine message.

But the Jews and Greeks were now greatly divided among themselves; some of them believed, and some of them did not believe, notwithstanding



WORSHIPPING JUPITE

all the divine proofs of the heavenly message; and as parties rose very high, and it was determined by some that they would even stone Paul and Barnabas, they left the place, that they might carry the gospel elsewhere, where the hearts of many more would be ready to receive it.

They now "fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia," at no great distance, "and there they preached the gospel."

Here a man, who was born a cripple, was sitting to hear a discourse, when the apostle Paul, perceiving that he had

faith in the truth of his message, addressed him before all the people, and "said, with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet; and he leaped and walked."

The heathen people were so astonished and delighted, that they said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They thought there were many gods, and that these were two of them. They knew no better, not having the Scriptures; and they took Barnabas for Jupiter, one of their gods, and Paul for Mercury, another of them; and according to

ACTS. 785

their custom of worshipping and honoring their deities, the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people, that is, have sacrificed the oxen to Paul and Barnabas; but the apostles rent their clothes, as the Jews did when they heard blasphemy, and showed what horror they felt, that the people should make such a mistake. They then declared they were only men, and exhorted them to cast off their false gods, and believe in "the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." The people were, however, even then with difficulty prevented from worshipping the apostles. Yet notwithstanding this servile adoration of them, when, soon after, some Jews arrived in the city from Antioch and Iconium, who told them how the apostles had been driven from those places, and spoke against them—these same people who had seen the miracle performed on the lame man, and would then have adored the apostles, now were persuaded to stone Paul, so fickle were they; and they hurt him so much that he appeared to be dead, and his body was dragged by them out of the city. He must have been dreadfully injured by this treatment; but God left the people without excuse for future punishment, in thus treating his servant, and tried the boldness of Paul in his cause; and when he was left for dead, he wonderfully restored him, so that he was immediately able to pursue his journey to another place; "and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe," a city of Lycaonia, as mentioned in the sixth verse, and there they made many disciples; and then they revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, to instruct, comfort, and establish the minds of those that had believed, that they might not be frightened at their persecutions.

Here the Christians now formed themselves into churches, congregations of faithful men; and the apostles having taught them and prayed with them, set them in order, and appointed proper persons from among them to manage the worship of God, and for other Christian purposes.

Then they passed through Pisidia, the country where Antioch was, and came to Pamphylia, in Asia, and preached at Perga in that country, and thence went into Attalia, a sea-coast town on the borders of the Mediterrancan Sea. Then they took shipping and sailed to the other Antioch, which was in Syria, and delighted the Christians there by telling them of their travels, and of the great success which, notwithstanding all opposition, had attended their preaching of the gospel of Christ—"And there they abode a long time with the disciples."

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Disputes among the Christians at Jerusalem settled by the Apostles.

Acts xv., xvi.

WHILE Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, in Syria, some persons from Jerusalem came to Antioch, and raised a dispute. Paul and Barnabas, therefore, went to Jerusalem, to settle the question.

The affair being quietly settled, Paul and Barnabas now resolved on revisiting all the places where they had preached the gospel; and Barnabas wished John, whose surname was Mark, to accompany them; but he having been their companion on a former occasion, and left them to bear their labors and dangers alone, in a manner that did not quite please Paul, who perhaps thought him timid, or not sufficiently zealous, Paul did not wish to have his help. This caused a misunderstanding between Paul and Barnabas, and so they parted company. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and, as we learn in the latter part of the fourth chapter, the native place of Barnabas. Paul, accompanied by Silas, took another route, and went through Syria and Cilicia, which was his native country, and visited the churches or assemblies of Christians, whom he had before brought, through his preaching, to receive the religion of Christ.

Among the places visited again by the apostle Paul were Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place he found a young disciple named Timotheus,



BUINS OF TROAS.

or Timothy—the same to whom he afterwards wrote the Epistles. The mother of this young man was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek; and so it happened that he was not circumcised. Now, as Paul wished to have his aid as a fellow-laborer, seeing that he was a youth of fine talent and

spirit, but as the Jews would not have allowed him to speak in the synagogues unless he had been circumcised, Paul therefore "took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters;" who, knowing that

his father was a Greek, and therefore had not had the rite performed upon him, would have raised objections to his preaching.

And now they travelled throughout Phrygia in Asia, and the region or country of Galatia, in that part called Asia Minor; then they came to Mysia, another country in Asia Minor, and "assayed" or attempted, to go into Bithynia, another country also in Asia Minor, but were prevented by a particular impression made on their minds by the Spirit of God. Perhaps had they gone, their lives would have been taken, and these God designed to spare for future labors. So they did not stop at Mysia; but "came down to Troas," then a colony of the Romans, now called Alexandria.

Being prompted by the Spirit of God in a vision, or sort of trance, which happened in the night, and in which a man of Macedonia appeared before Paul, and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," Paul proceeded thither, which was a very large country in Europe. He loosed, or set sail, from Troas, and reached Samothracia, an island in the Archipelago, and the next day Neapolis, a seaport, which was a part of Macedonia. From thence he went on to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and stopped there some days. Here, on the Sabbath day, they visited one of the spots where the Jews worshipped, and "spake to the women which resorted thither."

Among these women was one named Lydia. She was a seller of purple—most likely of purple dye, which was a valuable article at that time—and she belonged to a place called Thyatira, a large city in the province of Asia, in Asia Minor. She was a worshipper of the one true God, but knew nothing of Jesus Christ. But now she heard him preached, the Lord opened her heart, like a door, to let him into it by faith; and she received Jesus there, and embraced all the important truths spoken about him by Paul. And she was baptized, and received the sacred messengers into her house, while they remained in that neighborhood.

The apostles regularly went to a place used for prayer; and a girl, who knew their custom, followed them, as they went every day, and cried after them, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This girl was one of a certain class of people of those days, who pretended to be divinely inspired, and who might possibly have been permitted to perform some astonishing things by the aid of the devil, who seems to have had full possession of her mind. By her predictions she gained much money. It seems that she was not free, but belonged to masters who received what she gained. Paul, perceiving

what kind of a person she was, was grieved at her condition, and, in the name of Jesus Christ, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. "And he came out the same hour."

Her masters were greatly enraged that they had now lost their gains, for the girl could serve the devil no longer. They therefore seized Paul and



IN THE STOCKS.

Silas, and carried them before the magistrates, accusing them of teaching doctrines and customs contrary to the laws. Then the magistrates had them stripped, by tearing off their clothes; and commanded them to be beaten with rods, after which they were cast into prison, and the jailer had orders to take the greatest care that they should not escape. So he thrust them "into the innermost prison "-one that, lying beyond others, and having more bolts and bars, was the more secure. And still, to add to their security, he put their feet fast into heavy wood stocks, and thus they lay, as it is supposed, in the most painful position, with their sore and naked backs stretched upon the cold

and dirty stones—the prisoners not sitting, as in modern times, when the stocks are used, but being compelled to occupy the most painful and unnatural position suggested by the mode of punishment.

In this situation, which would have made most men groan and weep, Paul and Silas, being comforted in their minds in an extraordinary way, sang praises to God in the middle of the night: it is thought that they sang one of David's Psalms, which is not unlikely. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." The keeper awoke with the noise, and seeing the doors open, and the prisoners free, he drew his sword, and would have killed himself, fearing that he should be dreadfully punished for their escape. But Paul cried out to him, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." Then he called for a light, sprang in and "came trembling;" and, according to the Eastern custom of showing respect, fell down before Paul and Silas, and bringing them out of the inner prison, he began to talk to them directly about his poor soul, and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The apostles told

ACTS. 789

him to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and they also preached to his whole family. Then the jailer washed their stripes, which had perhaps begun to fester, and showed them every kindness. They had done good to his soul, and to the souls of his family, as well as saved his body, when he was about to destroy himself; and the least he could do for them, was to show them kindness by comforting their bodies. The people's hearts were all ready to receive the gospel from their lips; and having renounced their idolatries, they declared their readiness to become Christians, and were all of them baptized. Then the jailer took his prisoners into his house, and set meat before them, to refresh their wearied bodies, and they all rejoiced together.

In the morning, the magistrates thought that Paul and Silas had had punishment enough, and so sent orders for them to be released. But Paul,

being a Roman citizen, now maintained his privilege; teaching us, that Christianity is not at all opposed to our claiming and defending our civil rights, that is, those which belong to us as men and citizens. "They have beaten us openly uncondemned," said he, "being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." The magistrates had taken upon themselves to do



ROMAN CITIZENS.

what they were not authorized to do; for the magistrates were not to try prisoners, but only to see that the lawless were seized and secured, and that the law was properly put into execution when the prisoners were condemned. Paul, therefore, on account of others, as well as on his own account, would not sanction such shameful proceedings; he did not, however, demand revenge upon them, though he might have got them severely punished for what they had so unjustly done, but he required that they should acknowledge themselves wrong, and with all respect, make amends to them by fetching them out. So the magistrates, being now greatly frightened, went to the prison, and begged Paul and Silas to forgive them, and that they

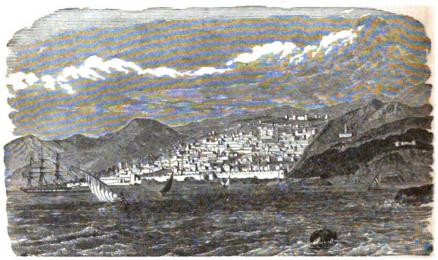
would leave the city as soon as possible, that nothing more might be said about the matter.

When they had quitted the prison, they paid another visit to their kind hostess, Lydia, and then pursued their journey.

#### Paul preaches at Thessalonica, and is persecuted there.

Acts xvII., xvIII.

PAUL and Silas, having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, both considerable cities in Macedonia, "came to Thessalonica, a free city of the same country," where the Roman governor resided. Here there



THESSALONICA.

"was a synagogue of the Jews," and, during three successive Sabbaths, Paul went in and reasoned with them about what the Scriptures said of the Messiah, and proved that Jesus was he. His facts and arguments were so forcible, that, accompanied by the power of the Spirit of God, many Jews, and Gentiles who had become Jews, were converted.

This enraged the unbelieving part of the Jews; and they, supposing Paul to be at the house of Jason—one of their number, whose heart had been brought to trust in Christ—they violently beset his house, and dragged him ou<sup>t</sup>, with others, to the rulers of the city, and charged them with turning

the world upside down, or throwing every place which they visited into confusion by their doctrines. The magistrates, however, acted on this occasion with great propriety, and as these Christians were accused of being troublers, they only required pledges of them that they would not in future disturb the peace of the city, but did not attempt to punish them, where they could not see they had committed any crime.

Paul and Silas having left the city quietly during the night, proceeded next to Berea, another city in Macedonia, and there also they "went into the synagogue of the Jews." Here the gospel was readily received by the people, who heard Paul and Silas with attention, and then examined the Scriptures for themselves, to see if what was said about the Messiah agreed with the character of Jesus Christ; and so many of them became true Christians.

The Jews of Thessalonica, hearing of their success, followed them to that place, and stirred up the unthinking part of the people to disturb the apost! 38.

The apostle Paul was therefore sent out of the way, because against him the bitterest enmity prevailed; and Silas and Timotheus remained behind to explain things further to the young converts, who would have many questions to ask about what Jesus Christ taught and did.

Paul next went to Athens, a city in Greece, exceedingly famous for its knowledge and learning. When he arrived there his spirit was grieved and provoked, to see the stupidity of the people, notwithstanding all their knowledge, for the city was full of idols: it had more images called gods than all the rest of Greece, so that one humorously said of it, it was easier to find a god there than a man. Here Paul, according to his custom, disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, and with "the devout persons," or Jewish proselytes, who had left heathenism and embraced Judaism; and he also took every opportunity of conversing about Christ with the Athenians, whom he met in the great market-place.

In this city he was violently opposed by the heathen philosophers, called Epicureans and Stoics.

The Epicureans were so called from their first teacher, Epicurus Though they believed there was a God, they were foolish enough to believe that the world was made by chance, and that no Providence ruled over it. See how ignorant the wisest of men were without the Scriptures. The Stoics received their name, not from their founder, whose name was Zeno, but from a Greek word, Stoæ, which signifies a portico, or piazza, because

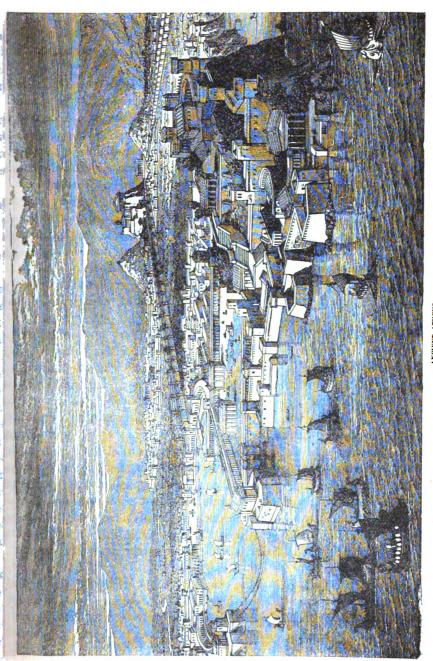
it was customary for Zeno to walk under a portico, and teach his scholars. He was wiser than the Epicureans, since he believed that God did make the world; but he, like them, denied that he cared anything about it after it was made; and so, instead of being ruled by His Providence, it was left to Fate.

These were the men with whom Paul had here chiefly to contend. They were, however, disposed to hear him; for though they despised him, and called him a babbler, yet, as he brought with him doctrines new to them—and they were fond of "some new thing"—they thought at least that they should be amused.

There was at Athens a celebrated place called the Areopagus, "in the midst of Mars' Hill." This building was used as a court of law, and was adapted to accommodate a large concourse of people. Here it was determined that Paul should publish his opinions. It was a fine opportunity, and he embraced it.

He told them that he had observed they were very superstitious, or given to the worship of many and false gods; and that in passing through their streets, he had even seen an inscription—"To the unknown God" -which perhaps meant the God of the Jews, of whom they had heard, but did not know. Now, he came to tell them who he was, and that instead of the world being made by chance, as some among them believed, He it was who made all things, and all men; and whose providence, so far from not noticing the world he made, even notices every individual, and fixes the boundaries of every man's life, and the very spot where he shall reside. And as we spring from God, our spirits being breathed into us by his Spirit, nothing could be more absurd than to imagine, that stone, carved into different images, should represent God, many of them being even unworthy to represent men, whom God has made. For a long while God had borne with this idolatry, but now Paul declared he had sent his apostles to bear witness against it, and called upon men everywhere to repent, for he has determined to judge the world, and Christ will be the judge, who is now risen from the dead.

On mentioning the subject of the resurrection the whole assembly seem to have been in a tumult. It was a doctrine either disbelieved or never thought of by the Grecian philosophers. "Some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again on this matter." So, as they were not disposed to hear any more at that time, and received his message so unfavorably, Paul left them Yet his address was not altogether useless: "Howbeit, certain



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men clave unto him, and believed; among the which was Dionysius, the Areopagite," or a judge in the court of Areopagus: "and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

Paul next proceeded to Corinth, another Grecian city of considerable im-Here he took up his abode with a Jew named Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, who had lately left Rome in consequence of a decree of the Emperor that no Jews should remain there any longer. From what is reported by historians, it is supposed that this decree was made because the Jews were so violent in opposing the Christians, that they caused continual It appears that Paul and Aquila were of the same craft, or disturbances. trade, tent-makers, and this was one reason which brought them together. It was no disgrace among the Jews to be of a trade but rather a disgrace to be without, and therefore every one was brought up to a trade, that he might never want the means of procuring his livelihood; and so the apostle Paul, though a learned man, and brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel, that is, as his pupil, was nevertheless taught the craft of tent-making. Tents, in hot countries, are very common and useful, and it was by this trade that the apostle supported himself while preaching the gospel.

While at Corinth, Paul as usual visited and "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath;" and here he was joined by Silas and Timotheus.

The Jews having refused to hear what he had to say about Christ, Paul "shook his raiment," it being loose about him, as a sign that he would shake them off, and have no more to do with them, and went to the Gentiles who were in the city. For this purpose he took up his abode at the house of a man named Justus, who, though not a Jew, was a sincere man, and worshipped the true God, having learned about him from the Jews, his house being near the synagogue. His labors were, however, not altogether useless among the Jews, for "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house:" many Corinthians also believed.

Paul was, indeed, particularly encouraged in his labors at Corinth, for God told him in a vision, "I have much people in this city." "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

The success of Paul excited the enmity of the Jews, whose rage against Christ was as bitter as it still is. They therefore rose up against Paul, and accused him before Gallio, the Roman officer, who at that time presided over Achaia, in which the conquered province of Corinth was. Gallio saw their wicked rage, and told them that if Paul had done any bad thing he

would have taken notice of it, but as they accused him only about religious matters, he had nothing to do with such disputes, and so he drove the Jews away from his presence. The Greeks, seeing how he treated the Jews, and knowing that they were not now in high favor, immediately fell upon Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him severely; so that the harm they wanted to do to Paul now fell upon themselves; "and Gallio cared for none of these things," but looked on with total indifference.

Paul's next journey was into Syria, and he took with him Priscilla and Aquila. Then he came to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia, where he still reasoned with the Jews, by entering into their synagogue.

Having left Ephesus, he landed at Cesarea, and visited the Christian church there. Thence he went to Antioch, "and after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."

While Paul was engaged elsewhere, Apollos visited Ephesus. This was a most eloquent Jew, who had been taught about Christ by John the Baptist. Here he preached boldly, urging men, no doubt, to repentance and faith in the Messiah. But Aquila and Priscilla having been instructed by the apostle Paul, knew more than he did, and they therefore assisted in showing him "the way of God more perfectly," and about Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

After this, Apollos visited different parts of Achaia, and strengthened the minds of those who believed in Christ, and "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, that Jesus was the Christ."

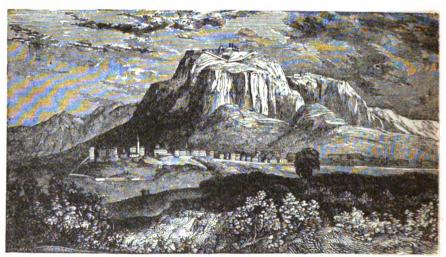
### Paul's extensive Travels to preach the Gospel.

#### ACTS XIX.

In the last chapter we learnt that Apollos visited different parts of Achaia, and here we are informed that he also paid a visit to Corinth, which was the capital of Achaia. During this time Paul "passed through the upper coasts," or countries, to the north of Ephesus, called Phrygia, Ionia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia (See Asia Minor, at the end of Acrs), and then again to Ephesus. He here instructed some of John the Baptist's disciples, and baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and he "spake boldly" in the synagogue "for the space of three months concerning the kingdom of God," that is, the reign of Christ the Messiah.

However, at length he gave over instructing the Jews in this place, since their hearts were so much hardened against Christ; and "one Tyrannus" having a school of public instruction and disputation, he went there and taught his disciples about the way of salvation, and in this manner he passed two years. Ephesus being a place of great importance, and numbers of persons, both Jews and Greeks, visiting it for purposes of trade and information, the doctrines of the apostle were heard by most of these, and so conveyed abroad and spread in all the cities and towns of Asia.

Seeing the wonderful things done by the apostle, some "vagabond Jews," who strolled about from place to place, like our vagabond mountebanks, to



CORINTH.

gain a livelihood by their tricks, and who were "exorcists," or a sort of conjurers, tried to do a like thing in a similar way. Among these were seven sons of a Jew, and a "chief among the priests" at Ephesus; and they attempted to cast out evil spirits from those who were tormented with them, and said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." They, however, were soon proved to be impostors, to their injury and shame, to the honor of the apostle and advancement of the cause of Christ.

This affair was soon spread over the city of Ephesus, and produced a great change in many persons, both among the Jews and Greeks. Indeed, "many of them which used curious arts brought their books together, and

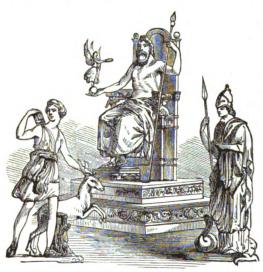
burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." This was a glorious triumph over Satan in his own territories, for Ephesus was a very wicked and idolatrous city, where magic was taught, and it was a deadly blow to the wicked art when the books were destroyed by which the people had learned how to perform it. The price of the books now burned has been reckoned, at the lowest rate, at about eight thousand eight hundred dollars; but some think it was not less than thirty-one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. Books were extremely dear before the art of printing was invented, and books on curious arts were dearer than others.

The apostle Paul now began to think about visiting some other parts, and having decided to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and thence to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, he sent forward Timotheus, or Timothy, to whom he wrote two epistles, and Erastus, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, as we learn in the sixteenth chapter of the Romans; and so these gave notice of his visit, and collected the Christians to receive him. While the apostle was about to leave Ephesus, there was, however, "no small stir" about the religion of Jesus; for the makers of images, which the idolatrous people called gods, having lost much of their custom, endeavored to excite a tumult, and to drive him out of the city.

Before we notice this affair, it may be necessary just to give you a short account of this famous city of Ephesus, and of its celebrated temple.

We have before said that Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia, and, indeed, it was the most famous place of trade in all Asia Minor. The ancient city stood about fifty miles south of Smyrna. It has long gone to decay, like many other once splendid cities of the East. The chief ornament of this city was the Temple of Diana, to erect which all the states in Asia were made to contribute a portion of their wealth. This temple was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was nearly as long as St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and nearly as wide as St. Paul's at its greatest breadth. It was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble pillars, seventy feet high, or twelve times the height of our tallest men, and these were either most curiously carved or highly polished. From accounts given by ancient writers this temple was two hundred and twenty years in building, and was continually improved for four hundred years. imaginary goddess, Diana, was represented by a small statue made of ebony -a hard, black, and valuable wood-and the people were weak enough to believe that this piece of carved wood was sent down to them from heaven

by Jupiter, a name by which they distinguished one of the heathen gods, and whom they supposed to be the father of Diana. To this statue, therefore, they paid a great deal of reverence. It had been formerly placed in



DIANA, JOVE AND MINERVA.

the trunk of an old elm, but, from the honors paid to it, it was at length provided with this magnificent building. All the inhabitants of Ionia went every year to Ephesus to solemnize a festival to "the great goddess Diana," and wives and children carried offerings to her temple, many of which were exceedingly rich and valuable. Priests who officiated on this occasion were liberally maintained by the people; and the citizens, no doubt, made much money by the gathering together of so large a number of people, many

of whom were wealthy, and who remained during the continuance of the sports which accompanied their offerings.

The throngs that yearly visited Ephesus furnished the silversmiths with plenty of employment to make silver models of this famed building, which they so much venerated, and they brought no small gain to the craftsmen. One of these silversmiths in particular, whose name was Demetrius, called together his fellow-workmen, and told them of the injury they suffered by the reduced sale of their silver temples, in consequence of the apostle Paul having "almost throughout all Asia persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands." And he showed that the temple itself was in danger of falling into contempt and neglect, owing to the success of the apostle's preaching. His interested auditors felt the force of what he said, and "they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Their noise and shouting roused the whole city, and having put many others in a rage against the apostle's preaching, the mob caught Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's companions, and they rushed with them into the



BUINS OF THE THEATRE AT EPHESUS.

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theatre, where public plays were acted in honor of the goddess, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very probably it was intended to hurry the servants of Christ thither to throw them to the wild beasts.

Paul, not in the least afraid, would have followed them into the theatre to preach the gospel even to this enraged multitude; but the Christians at Ephesus advised him not to expose himself to danger, and probably thought the people were not in a mind to attend to anything he might say.

When the people were got together in the theatre, a great many of them did not know why they were there, and as one asked another what was the matter, all were in confusion.

In the meantime Alexander, who was a professed Christian, was dragged into the theatre, the Jews helping to push him in, and so uniting in their wicked deeds with the Ephesian idolaters. Here Alexander would have defended his faith, but when he attempted to speak, the mob drowned his voice, and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They knew that they could say nothing in their own defence in reply to Alexander, and so for two hours he tried in vain to speak, and they roared out against him.

At length "the town clerk" interfered. (This was a person of some influence and authority; and he hit upon a very good method to restore quietness.) "Why," said he, "you know that everybody worships the goddess Diana; there is no need to dispute about that; and you know that her image came down from Jupiter, and as nobody can contradict it, what need is there of all this noise?" (This is just what he would have said in English, for his words are to the same purport.) "Besides," he added, "these men have done no harm to our goddess; they have neither robbed the temple of her wealth, nor said anything that I know of against her dignity. However, if they have done any harm, the law is ready to appeal to; but if they have not, the injury will fall upon your own heads for disturbing the peace and making this terrible uproar; and if you do not immediately depart quietly home, you will all be in danger of being taken up as rioters." Having spoken to this effect, the people grew a little cool, and, seeing that they could do nothing to stop the doctrines of the apostle, and might injure themselves, they quietly departed to their homes. foolishness of their proceeding was thus quickly made very apparent to the idolatrous multitude. In fact, there is nothing that can be made to appear so ridiculous to the least reflective mind, as the enmity that would overcome truth by the merest outcry and passion.

## Paul's Travels and Preaching.—His Arrest and Trial at Jerusalem.— Taken to Cesarea and Pleads in his Defence.

#### ACIS XX.-XXVI.

WE have now to follow the apostle Paul rapidly through some more of his travels; and, except a few occasional remarks, shall merely notice the places where he went, so as to explain their situation and importance, if they have not been noticed before.

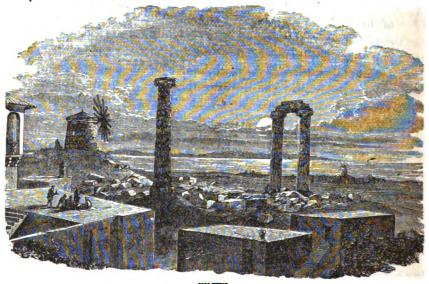
Paul, having taken leave of the disciples at Ephesus, now went into Macedonia, and having visited the disciples there—at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beræa, of which we have lately read-"he came into Greece," or, as some think, Achaia. Here he remained three months, and was preparing to sail for Syria, when he heard that the Jews were watching for him to kill him if he went in that direction; and so he resolved not needlessly to put himself into danger, but returned by land through Macedonia to visit the churches there. He was now accompanied into Asia by Sopater, of Beræa, and Luke, the writer of the Acts, who includes himself as one of the party when he speaks of "us;" and Aristarchus, and Secundus, of Thessalonica; and Gaius, of Derbe; and Timothy, and Tychicus, and Trophimus, of Asia, went on to prepare matters for the apostle's reception at Troas. They sailed from Philippi, as the apostle had intended to do, and it being a short way they reached Troas in five days. The apostle, however, was not many hours behind them, since he joined them there and spent a Sabbath with them, and they remained there altogether but seven days.

The companions of Paul now took a passage in a ship to go from Troas to Assos, a city of Asia by the sea-side; and here the apostle, having travelled on foot, shortly joined them; when, having been taken into the ship, they sailed for Mitylene, a city in Lesbos, an island situated in the Egean Sca, now known by the name of the Archipelago, being that part of the Mediterranean Sea which divides Greece from Asia Minor. Thence they continued their course "over against Chios," another island in the Egean Sca, and the next day they reached Samos, another island in the same sea, and anchored or stopped at Trogyllium, a small island near Samos, for there was a bay here convenient for vessels to anchor in; and the next day they came to Miletus, the chief city of Ionia. In his way to this place he passed by Ephesus, for he had determined to sail past it, "because he would not spend the time in Asia," wishing to be at Jerusalem

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at the great feast of Pentecost, that he might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel to a great number of Jews, out of all countries, whom he knew would come to that feast.

Miletus being only about twelve miles from Ephesus, the apostle sent for the elders or managing members of the church in that city, and he



MILETUS.

most affectionately addressed them, urging them to hold fast their profession of faith in Christ; and he told them this was the last time he should see them, for he knew that he was about to go where he must become a great sufferer and a prisoner for the sake of the Lord Jesus, for whom he was even willing to lay down his life; "and then he kneeled down and prayed with them all." We are not told what his prayer was; but we may readily suppose that it was one of the most earnest, affectionate, and tender prayers that was ever offered up to God, for he seemed to love the Ephesians most sincerely, and was deeply concerned for their happiness; "and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." In this way Esau fell on Jacob's neck, and Joseph on his brother Benjamin's; it was, as you have heard before, the Eastern way of showing great affection.

Having parted with these elders, who accompanied Paul to the ship, and did not leave him till the very last moment, he and his companions sailed

ACTS. 803

straight for Coos, or Cos, another island in the Ægean sea, and the day following they reached Rhodes, a celebrated island, which had a city of the same name. Here was that famous statue called the Colossus of Rhodes, which cost twelve years of the sculptor's labor, and five hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars. Its height was seventy cubits, or one hundred and five feet. It was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. As it lay along it astonished all beholders, for few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb.

They next proceeded to a place called Patara, a city of Lycia, which was a country of Asia Minor, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean. Here they found a ship for Phœnicia, and thither they sailed, and passing Cyprus stood for Syria, and landed at Tyre, the chief city of Phœnicia. Having met with some Christians here, they stayed to establish them in their faith, and were with them seven days.

Then they sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais, a city of Galilee, on the seacoast, where they remained with some fellow-Christians during one day. And the day following Paul's company stopped at Cesarea, "and entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist," undoubtedly the same who had raptized the eunuch, and there they took up their abode while they remained in that place. It is worthy of remark that Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy, or were inspired by the Holy Spirit to foretell events which should happen to the Church of Christ.

While the apostolical travellers were at Cesarea, the prophet Agabus arrived from Judea, and foretold the treatment Paul would meet with from

the Jews at Jerusalem; at the same time, taking the girdle which fastened Paul's robes around his body, he expressed it by the significant sign of binding his own hands and feet. This made Paul's companions weep and entreat him not to go to Jerusalem; but the



APPROACH TO JERUSALEM.

holy servant of God, bent upon the conversion of men, would not be dissuaded from his purpose on so important an occasion, when thousands of Jews would be collected together at the feast, and he answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Shortly after this the party took their carriages, or rather, "their baggage," and went to Jerusalem, accompanied by some disciples of Cesarca, and one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, who happened to reside at Jerusalem, and who accommodated them at his house.

When Paul visited the temple the Jews "laid hands on him," and treated him so cruelly, that they would have killed him had not the Roman commandant rushed in among them with some soldiers and rescued him. He, however, supposed, from their treating Paul in this manner, that he might have been doing something wrong, and ordered him to be bound with chains, and so the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled.

Paul was now, with some difficulty, carried prisoner to the castle, for the Jews still pressed upon him to murder him. Here he conversed with the commandant, who fancied he might be an Egyptian robber that had done much mischief, and, accompanied by four thousand desperate men, had lately troubled the neighboring country. Paul then informed him that he was mistaken, for he was a citizen of Tarsus, no mean city in Cilicia, and begged to be allowed to address the people, which he did, as he stood on the steps of the ascent to the castle. He then told them that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel," a learned Jew; that is, he sat to receive his instructions, as scholars then sat beneath their masters; that he had been as zealous as any Jew could be in behalf of his religion, but that he was converted on his way to Damascus, as he was going to persecute the Christians, and that now he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to preach to the Gentiles. This they could not bear, for they fancied themselves to be the only people whom God would honor with a divine message; and now again they broke out into a rage and tumult. The chief captain then ordered Paul to be scourged; but while they were binding him he said he was a Roman citizen; and it was a great crime to scourge such a person Tarsus was a free city, and Paul's parents being citizens without a trial. of Tarsus, he was born free; so Paul escaped being scourged, and the captain was greatly frightened that he had even bound him; for it was also a great offence against the Roman law to bind a Roman citizen.

On the morrow, Paul was taken before the chief priests and council, or Jewish Sanhedrim. While he was attempting to address them, the high priest, Ananias, commanded some to give him a slap in the face, which the apostle resented as a violation of the law, and called the priest a whited

wall, meaning that he was a hypocrite, looking fair without but bad within. The Jews then reproved him for reviling God's high priest, when he acknowledged that he would not have done it, but he was not aware that he was the high priest.

The apostle, finding that the Jews would not hear him, wisely bethought himself to divide his enemies among themselves; and as one thing which had offended the Jews was his preaching the resurrection of Jesus, he called out that he was brought there for professing his hope in the resurrection of the dead. Now the Sadducees denied that there was any resurrection, but the Pharisees believed it, and immediately, as Paul had foreseen, they fell out among themselves; and the Scribes in the council, who were Pharisees, declared that Paul was unjustly accused.

As the parties became violent, Paul's life was in danger amongst them, and the chief captain, now fearing the consequences of his being injured as a Roman citizen, commanded the soldiers again to rescue him, and take him into the castle. Here Jesus appeared to him in a vision, and told him he must preach his gospel yet at Rome.

Above forty of the Jews, enraged at the deliverance of the apostle, now took a solemn oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul; and they proposed to the chief priests and elders, that if they would make an excuse to have him once more before the council, they would take care that he should not again escape alive. However, God defeated their wicked purpose, for, providentially, a sister of Paul's had a son at Jerusalem, who, having learned the intended plot of these men, went himself and informed the apostle, who sent him to tell the chief captain. The captain then lost no time to protect him, but ordered a body of soldiers to take him at night to Cesarea, a place which was seventy-five miles from Jerusalem, and where Felix resided, who was governor of Judea. The captain, whose name was Claudius Lysias, also sent a favorable letter to Felix, which you may read in the twenty-third chapter.

At Cesarca Paul was kept for five days in "Herod's judgment hall," or court for holding trials. At the end of this time Ananias, the high priest, and the elders had travelled from Jerusalem, accompanied by an orator, or sort of counsellor, named Tertullus, for the purpose of prosecuting Paul. Tertullus, appearing in court, delivered a very flattering speech to Felix, and then accused Paul of being "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of seditions," and "a ringleader of the Nazarenes," a name of contempt given by the Jews to the Christians, derived from Jesus being brought up at

Nazareth. Paul, in reply, defended himself with great eloquence, and his speech agreed with what the captain had said about him in his letter. Felix would not, therefore, hastily condemn him, but put off the business till he had inquired and thought more about it, and had seen the chief captain, who could more particularly explain what he knew of the matter In the meantime he ordered a centurion to keep guard over Paul, but allowed him to go unfettered, and to see any of his friends.

Some days afterwards Felix, accompanied by his wife Drusilla, sent for Paul, and had some private conversation with him "concerning the faith in Christ." His wife was a Jewess, the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten by worms, and sister of the king called Agrippa; and probably Felix wished to satisfy his curiosity, and that of his wife, about the new faith, which she could better understand than he, knowing something about the



FOUNTAIN AT NAZARETH.

prophecies of the Messiah. Paul's reasoning was most powerful; and while he took this opportunity of striking at some vices which he knew had disgraced the character of Felix, and showed him that, though a ruler himself, he must be judged at last for all his crimes before the Judge of the whole earth, the guilty "Felix trembled," and then put off the conversation for another opportunity; but he lulled his conscience to rest and never met Paul again, except on common matters, when he hoped he might

in some manner bribe him to gain his liberty.

In this unjust way was Paul kept a prisoner during two years, when Porcius Festus was appointed governor of Judea in the room of Felix. Felix did not even then set the apostle at liberty, but left Paul bound, to please the Jews. This was, however, of no advantage to him, for he was himself accused by some of the Jews of oppressive conduct, and taken before Cæsar, to answer for his own real offences; and had it not been that he had a brother named Pallas, who had great influence in the court, he would have been severely punished.

The new governor, Festus, arriving at Jerusalem, the Jews had great hopes that they should now accomplish their wicked purposes against Paul; and "the high priest and chief of the Jews" even begged it as a favor of Festus, that he would send for Paul back to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to be tried, where they would not have failed to have murdered him. Festus, however, thought he would first go to Cesarea, and inquire into the merits of the case, and he wished the Jews to accompany him thither, and bring forward their charges against Paul. On reaching Cesarea he took his seat as judge, and the apostle was brought before him; but his accusers were not able to prove anything against him. Notwithstanding this, the wicked governor, who ought to have set him free, proposed, after all, to send him before the Sanhedrim, wishing by so doing to gratify the great persons among the Jews. Paul, however, again took shelter under his rights as a Roman citizen, and demanded that he should at once go before the emperor, Nero, then in the seventh year of his reign, which completely defeated the malicious schemes of his adversaries, and left no means of evasion for Festus.

Agrippa, who ruled over the northeastern portion of Palestine, with the title of king, and his sister Bernice, came now to pay a visit to Festus, and congratulate him on his new dignity. Festus told Agrippa how much he was perplexed about Paul, that he had been tried before him and appeared to be an innocent man; but that, as the matters in dispute were chiefly things which concerned the Jews, and which he did not well understand, he had wished to have sent him before the Sanhedrim, but Paul had resolved to appeal to Cæsar.

Agrippa, being a Jew, had his curiosity excited, and wished to examine Paul himself; so he was, on the next day, brought before the public court, where Agrippa, and Festus, and Bernice, and all "the chief captains and principal men of the city," were assembled together. Festus then openly declared his opinion of Paul's innocence; but since he had appealed to Cæsar, he said he must now send him to Rome, but he really did not know what to say to the emperor as an excuse for sending him thither. He had, therefore, assembled this court for advice, and especially wished for that of Agrippa, an illustrious person, and who was capable of entering better into the matters in dispute.

After Festus had spoken, Agrippa told Paul he might speak; when the apostle again eloquently pleaded his own cause, stated his early life, his conversion, his mission to the Gentiles, his sufferings from the Jews, and the doctrines which he preached. At length he was suddenly interrupted by Festus, who said, with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself;

much learning doth make thee mad." To whom Paul replied that he was perfectly in his senses, and his doctrines were the words of truth. The apostle also so closely pressed his address upon Agrippa, that he forced him to cry out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul said to the king, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am. except these bonds."

After breaking up the council, Agrippa told Festus that if Paul had not appealed to Cæsar, he should certainly have advised his being set at liberty, for he was without doubt an innocent man.

### Paul's dangerous Voyage to Rome.—His Miracles at Melita.

Acts xxvii., xxviii.

PAUL was now given in charge of Julius, a Roman centurion, and sent on board a ship of Adramyttium to sail for Rome. Adramyttium was a seaport town in Mysia, a part of the province of Asia. He was accompanied in his voyage by a Christian brother named Aristarchus. They touched at Sidon, a famous city of Phœnicia, where Paul having some friends, Julius handsomely allowed him permission to go and visit them. Thence they sailed under the island of Cyprus, and crossed the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and then came to Myra, a city of Lycia. Here the centurion found a ship of Alexandria which was bound for Italy. Alexandria was the chief city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great, immediately after his conquest of Egypt, and it was peopled with Greeks. It had many



PTOLEMY PHILADELPHU

magnificent buildings, and a library built by Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the kings of Egypt, containing seven hundred thousand volumes, which was unfortunately burnt in a war between Julius Cæsar, who was the Roman dictator, and Pompey, a great Roman general.

In order to make a short cut to Italy, the master of the ship now stood towards Cnidus, a place in Asia Minor, but the wind being contrary, he altered

his course, and so sailed below Crete, one of the noblest isles in the Mediterranean Sea, which is now better known by the name of Candia, and then he passed over against Salmone, known latterly by the name of Capo

ACTS. 809

Salmone, a piece of land in the island of Crete. They next came to a place called the Fair Haven, near Lasea, a city on the sea-shore of Crete.

Having lost much time in sailing slowly against the wind, or stopping at the Fair Havens, the captain wished to proceed on his voyage, although the time of the year was now very unfavorable. Paul advised the centurion not to proceed, for there was great danger; but the captain persisted, and in the end found he had done wrong in not taking the apostle's advice. Rash people have often to repent of not taking kind and wise advice, when it is too late.

As the haven was not commodious to winter in, they proceeded on their course towards Phenice, a haven of Crete, having a favorable wind.

In a short time, however, the wind changed, and "a tempestuous wind" blew, "called Euroclydon." Here the ship, becoming unmanageable, was let to take her own direction, when she ran under an island called Clauda. Fearing they should be wrecked, with some difficulty they secured their boat to go ashore; and they passed ropes and chains round



CRETE.

about the ship to keep her from going to pieces, and they took down their sails, and so were driven about in the sea, wherever the wind might bear them, having only what the sailors call bare poles.

Still the tempest increased, and it was found necessary to throw everything burdensome overboard to lighten the ship, that she might the more easily float on the tossing waves. The sailors, in that age, steered their course by the sun, moon, and stars; but the skies were so darkened by this storm, and that for many days, that they could see none of the heavenly bodies, and therefore knew not whither they went; and in this uncertain state they gave themselves up for lost, expecting that the ship must at last strike on rocks or quicksands.

While they were all in a state of despair, God showed Paul in a vision

that he should not perish by the storm, but should yet bear witness to his truth before Cæsar at Rome. Then Paul told his companions that they would have acted wisely to take his advice; however, now they must be shipwrecked, but their lives would all be saved.

On the fourteenth night the seamen found, by sounding, that they were approaching some land, and so to prevent being wrecked they cast anchor. In sounding, a weight attached to a rope is cast into the sea, and by the depth to which it sinks, as indicated by the marks or knots on the rope, the sailors know whether they are near land. The iron anchor, whose shape every one knows, is attached to a heavy rope cable, and thrown into the sea, and its flukes burying themselves in the sandy or gravelly bottom of the sea, it holds the ship, so that it cannot be easily moved from its place or drift upon the rocks or sand. In this case four anchors were cast, to hold the ship the more firmly.

The sailors now attempted to escape for their lives, and were stealing off with the boat, when Paul declared that their continuance was absolutely necessary to save the rest; so the soldiers cut the rope by which the boat was tied to the ship, and let it go, that the sailors might not get into it.

They had now all fasted a long time, and the apostle urged them to eat before the ship was wrecked, and to gather a little strength for the toils they would have to undergo; and then he solemnly gave God thanks before them all, and began himself to eat. We ought never to take our food without giving God thanks; for, as good Mr. Henry says, we cannot put a morsel of food into our mouths till God first puts it into our hands.

The number of the crew and passengers was two hundred and seventysix. Having satisfied their appetites, the last thing which they could do to lighten the ship was to throw away the wheat and provisions; this they now did.

At daylight they saw a little creek of water, with a shore, and taking up the anchor, hoisted a sail, and tried to run the ship in. In doing this they ran upon some sands, where two seas met, and the fore part stuck fast, but the hinder part was broken by the furious waves.

The soldiers now proposed to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should escape, and they should be answerable for them; and the apostle Paul was to have been killed among the rest. But the centurion, who, by this time, greatly respected Paul, opposed the wicked, cruel, and ungrateful scheme; he therefore ordered those who could swim to escape to the shore, and that the others should ride on boards and broken pieces of timber from the ship, and escape the best way they could; and so they all cot "safe to land."

The place at which they landed was called Melita, which has generally been supposed to be the island now called Malta. Here the natives, though

uncivilized, showed the shipwrecked mariners a great deal of kindness; and as it was rainy, and they were fatigued and cold, they made a fire to warm them. As all helped to gather wood for it, Paul had also gathered a bundle, and while he was laying it on the fire a viper came out of it, being driven by the heat, and fastened upon his hand. The bite of this serpent is exceedingly venomous, and its poison the most dangerous. The natives, being very superstitious, thought that this was a judgment on Paul, whom they took for



THE VIPER.

some murderer God was now punishing, though he had escaped shipwreck. Paul shook off the reptile into the fire, and they all looked on expecting to see him fall down dead; but when they saw he had received no hurt, they then looked upon him as no less than a god.

This island had a governor named Publius, who very hospitably received the unfortunate strangers. But his hospitality was well repaid; for the father of Publius, lying at the time sick of a fever, Paul "prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him." As soon as this was known, many applied for and obtained a cure, and so the apostle and his companions were much respected during their stay, and received help for their voyage.

Here they remained during three months, when they sailed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle. They next landed at Syracuse, a famous city in Sicily, where they stopped three days. They then sailed round Sicily, and came to Rhegium, a city in Calabria; thence to Puteoli, a large sea-port town not far from where Naples now stands; here Paul met with some Christian brethren, and stayed seven days with them, Julius most probably kindly consenting to gratify their wishes that Paul might so stay. Thence they went to Appli Forum, which was fifty miles from Rome, and to which place some of the Christians of Rome, hearing of their approach, went to meet the apostle, as others did also at the Three Taverns, which was thirty miles from Rome. The sight of these Christians greatly encouraged Paul's heart, for he was glad to see they were not ashamed of him as a prisoner for the cause of Christ.

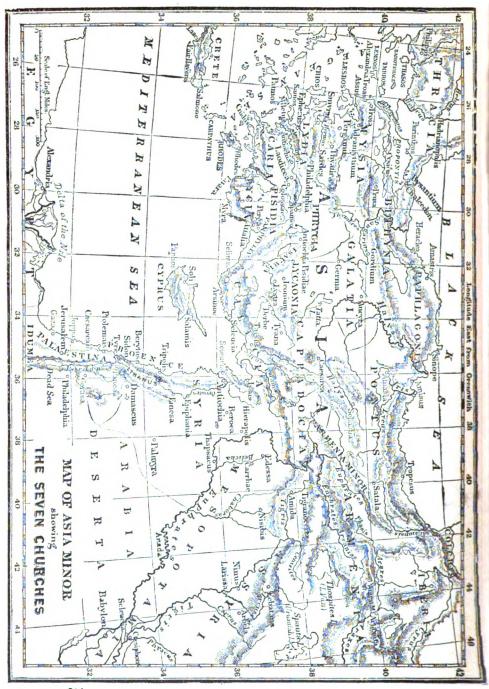
On arriving at Rome, Paul was allowed to have an apartment to himself, that he might not be annoyed by the common prisoners; perhaps he owed this favor to the kindness of Julius, the centurion, who had behaved towards him very handsomely throughout his whole voyage. He had, however, a soldier with him, and according to the Roman custom, this man was constantly chained to the apostle, as men are handcuffed together in our country.

Here Paul sent for the Jews at Rome, and told them how unjustly he had been treated by their brethren, and how he had been obliged to appeal to Cæsar; and he informed them about Christ, the true Messiah; and finding them disposed to hear him he met many that visited him, and instructed them in the gospel, and numbers of them believed in Jesus. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

In these facts we have constantly presented to our minds the faithfulness of this great and valiant worker in the establishment of Christianity; and therein, too, are reminded of the similar energy and steadfastness of others of the apostles, shown in their unconcern for the threatenings and persecutions directed against them. It seems truly wonderful that those who were selected to do the work of the Master were not only inspired and strengthened for it, but were also filled with a boldness that shrank not from the face of kings and emperors, and turned not away from the gaze of death. This especially appears in the case of several who, unlike Paul, seemed influenced by ignorance and temerity.



BOMANS AT TABLE IN TIME OF PAUL.



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# ASIA MINOR,

The Scene of the Labors of the Apostles Paul, Peter and John.

N the fulfilment of our purpose of furnishing all necessary assistance to our readers, for understanding and being profited by the word of God, we have thought it best to give such a description of the regions in which the gospel was preached by the apostles and especially by Paul, John, and Peter, as should enable those who may read the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, to know definitely where, and under what difficulties, they performed their labors.

The missionary labors of Paul commenced at Antioch (which was his Christian home in a higher sense than Jerusalem), and extending at first to his native city, Tarsus, and his native province, Cilicia, led, in his successive missionary journeys, to his traversing five of the seven provinces which then comprised the peninsula now known as Asia Minor, and his subsequent visits to Macedonia, Attica, Achaia, and eventually Illyricum, and his compulsory residence in Rome. extended his labors in later life to Spain, and perhaps to other portions of western Europe, is possible, but not certain; but we can only, in this place, concern ourselves with his work in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. The Apostle John, after many years of active labor in Jerusalem and Judæa, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem, continued his work in Ephesus and its vicinity, and after the martyrdom of Paul and Timothy, continued their work in the Roman province of Asia, the western province of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. The seven churches of Asia were all in this province. He was banished by Domitian to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean sea, at no great distance from Ephesus, but returned to that city after the death of the tyrant. The Apostle Peter, aside from occasional visits to Antioch, spent the earlier years of his ministry in Palestine, but finally crossed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, and at Edessa, Nisibis, and

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Babylon, preached, founded schools, and wrote his epistles, visiting also Ephesus and Corinth, and ending his ministry by imprisonment and martyrdom at Rome.

It will be seen, then, that the regions which we have to describe in connection with the apostolic labors, as recorded in the New Testament, are Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, and Syria and Mesopotamia. Let us first understand where Asia Minor is. If you will look at any good map of Asia, or, what will be better, at any good map of the Turkish empire, and the seat of the war which has been going on in 1877, between Russia and Turkey, you will notice that the Mediterranean sea extends almost due eastward to the Syrian coast, and that the coast line runs nearly from north to south, as the eastern boundary of the great sea. Now look farther north on the same map, and about 350 miles to the north you will find the Black sea, which in old times was called the Euxine sea. Running your finger westward, along the south shore of the Black sea, you come to the Bosphorus, or strait leading into the sea of Marmora, in which Constantinople is situated. Passing down this strait, into and through the whole length of the sea of Marmora, which in Bible times was called the Propontis, you come to another strait now called the Dardanelles, but in former times, the Hellespont, which leads into a sea full of islands, called the Ægean sea or Archipelago, which is really a part of the Mediterranean. If you have followed my directions carefully, you will see that you have passed around three sides of a peninsula or tract of land bounded by water, on the north, the west, and the south sides. This great peninsula, nearly 700 miles long from east to west, and about 400 miles wide, is ASIA MINOR. It is separated from Syria and Armenia on the east by the mountains of the lofty Taurus range. Its history for the past two thousand years has been full of interest; some of the most renowned cities of the world, such as ancient Troy, Ephesus, Tarsus, and Smyrna, were within its boundaries; many of the largest and most influential of the early Christian churches were founded here by the apostles and their successors; for five or six hundred years after the Christian era, the churches of Asia Minor exerted a powerful influence over all Christian Europe. At a later period, the country fell into the hands of the Turkomans, and finally was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, who have held it to the present time, and have reduced much of it to the condition of a desert. It is still, however, the most populous and wealthy part of their empire.

But we have only to describe the country as it was in the time of the

apostles. If you will look again at the map (our map of Asia Minor in this book), you will see in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean sea that there is a gulf projecting into the land; this is called the gulf of Issus, and that part of the Mediterranean below it, the sea of Cilicia. From the south a river flows down from the Syrian mountains, and discharges its waters into this Cilician sea; it is the river Orontes, and a few miles above its mouth, you will find the city of Antioch. That city did not belong to Asia Minor, but was one of the capitals of Syria. It was a very rich, beautiful, and populous city. Here the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, and the Christian church of Antioch, soon after Paul's time, had a hundred thousand members, and three thousand pastors and teachers. At this point were started the first Christian missions to the heathen. This was not far from A. D. 45. Previous to this time, Paul (or, as he was then called, Saul) had spent considerable time in his native city of Tarsus in Cilicia, preaching the gospel, and probably establishing churches in that city and its vicinity, among the refined and intelligent people, who had made it noted for its learning. But the first missionaries sent out from Antioch were Saul, or Paul, Barnabas, a converted Levite from Cyprus, and his nephew John Mark (the evangelist), a native of Jerusalem. Passing down the Orontes to Seleucia, the magnificent port of Antioch, they sailed from thence to Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, and commenced their labors among the kinsmen and friends of Barnabas. After spending a few days there they passed along the southern coast of the island, which was then very populous, to Paphos, at its western end. Paphos was a large and very wicked city, wholly given up to the worship of the heathen goddess Venus; here Paul, by a miracle, caused a Jewish magician, who was opposing the work of Christ, to become blind, and the word preached was blessed to the conversion of many of the people of Paphos. We have recently had the most convincing proofs of the idolatry of the people of Cyprus, in the discoveries made by General di Cesnola of temples, idols, shrines, amulets and votive offerings, at Paphos, which is now in ruins, and in other parts of the island.

Without visiting the northern portion of the island, Paul and his companions sailed directly from Paphos to Perga, a city of Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, on the main land, northwest from Paphos. Here they first entered Asia Minor, Cyprus being a separate Roman province, governed by a proconsul, or officer appointed by the Roman senate. Asia Minor, as we now call this peninsula, consisted at the time it was visited by Paul and his companions of seven Roman provinces, which, beginning at the west, were

named Asia, Bithynia, Galatia, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Cappadocia and Pontus. These provinces, some of them under other names, had been independent kingdoms before the time of Alexander the Great, and some of them had continued to be tributary kingdoms, first to Alexander and his successors, and afterward to Rome, till near this time. We find the old names remaining, though without definite boundaries, in the western provinces, at the time of Paul's journeys through them. Thus, Antioch in Pisidia is spoken of (in distinction from the Syrian Antioch), Pisidia being the old name for the northern part of the province of Pamphylia, as Lycia (whose chief cities, Myra and Patara, were visited by Paul at a later period) was, of the southern part of that province. Iconium, Lystra and Derbe are said to be cities of Lycaonia, that being the former name of the southwestern part of the province of Galatia. Phrygia was the old name of the eastern half of the province of Asia, and the Phrygians, like the Galatians, were a tribe or nation of different origin from the peoples who surrounded them.\* Mysia was the former name of a tract in the north of the province of Asia, and extending to the shores of the Hellespont and the Propontis, the present Dardanelles, and sea of Marmora. Of these seven provinces, Paul, in his several missionary journeys, traversed five. There is no evidence that he ever entered Pontus or Bithynia, though he attempted to go into both. These two provinces, forming the entire northern districts of Asia Minor, have for their northern boundary the entire southern shore of the Euxine or Black sea, and the now important cities of Trebizond, Tocat, Batoum, and Erzeroom, are within their limits.

Of the southern and western provinces, Cilicia was his native province and often the scene of his labors; Cappadocia, north of Cilicia, was visited and crossed in his second and third journeys; Galatia was traversed and its principal cities visited in his first, second and third journeys; and to the churches in Galatia his Epistle to the Galatians was addressed;† Pamphylia

<sup>†</sup> Paul's first visit to the cities of southern Galatia, or Lycaonia, as the region is called in Acts xiv. 6, was connected with his early experiences of the hostility and malignity of the unconverted Jews, which grew in intensity with every subsequent year of his life. Driven by their persecutions out of Antioch in Pisidia, where he had established a large and growing church, he was followed by his persistent foes to Iconium, and after long and successful labora there, forced to fly from a mixed mob of Jews and Gentiles, to Lystra, where a miracle of



<sup>\*</sup> The Galatians were of the same stock as the Gauls, or inhabitants of France, and the resemblance between the two nations was very strong in form and figure, in language and in their excitability and emotional tendency, and their fickleness and levity. The Epistle to the Galatians gives many illustrations of these traits of character.

was crossed in his first journey, both in going and returning, and its two principal cities, Perga and Attalia, visited; in his third journey he spent some time at Patara, and crossed thence to the island of Rhodes; in his last journey recorded in the Acts, that from Jerusalem to Rome, he touched at Myra, in the southern part of the province, and was there transferred to another ship. The province of Asia was the scene of his longest and most arduous labors. In three of his missionary journeys he passed through portions of its territory; in his first journey visiting some of its eastern cities: in his second, traversing the northern part, or Mysia, stopping for some time at Adramyttium, Assos, and Alexandria Troas, from whence he first entered Europe; in his third journey he entered the province from Galatia, visiting Philadelphia and Sardis; making his head-quarters for two or three years at Ephesus, and preaching and organizing churches at Trogyllium and Miletus, and possibly also visiting Crete, whither he afterward sent Titus. Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos, was visited, possibly twice, in these journeys, and very possibly Samos also. Laodicea and Colossæ, to the churches in both which cities he addressed epistles (the socalled Epistle to the Ephesians having been probably a circular letter written to the several churches in Asia; see Colossians iv. 13-16), had not been visited by Paul in either of these journeys, nor, apparently, had Hierapolis, a large city near Laodicea, noted for its mineral springs. Philemon, to whom a short epistle is also addressed, was a convert under Paul's preaching, perhaps at Ephesus, and seems to have been the founder of the church at Colossæ.

His second and third missionary journeys extended into Europe; in the second he went, by way of Samothracia and Neapolis, to Philippi, the chief city of eastern Macedonia, where he and Silas were imprisoned in violation

healing wrought by him caused the heathen inhabitants to attempt to pay divine honors to him; but Jewish malignity again prevailed, and he was stoned by the mob. Escaping with his life by a miracle, he went on to Derbe, where he was not molested, and after planting a church there, he went back to Lystra, Iconium and the Pisidian Antioch, and confirmed the disciples in their faith. In his subsequent journeys (his second and third) he returned first to Derbe, Lystra (where he found among the converts his young, but greatly beloved companion, Timothy), and Iconium, and thence proceeded through the mountain passes into the ancient Phrygia, now the eastern part of the province of Asia, and after planting some churches there, turned northeastward to Pessinus and Ancyra, cities of Galatia, to the churches in which the Epistle to the Galatians may have been addressed. In his third journey he is supposed to have visited also Tavia, another Galatian city, almost on the border of Pontus. It is supposed that there were Christian churches in Pontus at this time, for among the 3,000 converted at the day of Pentecost were Jews from Pontus. Acts ii. 9.



of the Roman law, and the next day, after a miracle, and the conversion of the jailer and his family, were released with honor, by the terrified magistrates. The epistle of Paul to the Philippian church was one of the results of his labors here. From thence they proceeded to Amphipolis and Apollonia, and, without much delay, went forward to Thessalonica (the Salonika of the present day), where their labors were abundantly blessed. The church at Thessalonica became one of the largest and most efficient of those planted by the apostle in Europe. To it were addressed two of his epistles. Driven from this city by the persecution of the Jews, Paul and Silas went on to Berea, where another church was planted. These Macedonian churches were revisited several times by the apostle, and there is reason to believe that after his acquittal at Rome he went to Macedonia, and from thence into Illyricum (the present Dalmatia and Montenegro).

From Berea Paul went alone by ship to Cenchrea, where he planted a church, and thence to Athens; and in that chief city of the Greek learning. and philosophy, preached Christ before its most brilliant scholars. His success here, however, was not so great as in Corinth, which he next visited, and where he remained nearly two years, and founded a church, which was for several centuries the largest and most influential in Greece. To this church his two longest epistles are addressed. His labors at this period were not confined to Corinth. Other cities of Achaia had the benefit of his zealous efforts. More than once he visited Ephesus, and continued his watch-care over the churches of Asia. In his last return to Jerusalem he was unable to stop at Ephesus, but met the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus, and gave them his parting blessing. If our readers have followed, on our excellent map of Asia Minor, these journeys of the Apostle Paul, they cannot fail to have formed a very clear idea of the regions traversed by this early missionary.

Let us now briefly refer to the labors of the Apostle John in the province of Asia, at a considerably later date. As the chief pastor or bishop at Ephesus, the apostle's age and infirmity of body seem to have restricted him to a much narrower sphere of action than that of the Apostle Paul. Still the province of Asia was at this time very populous, and the great church at Ephesus, and the large and flourishing ones at Trogyllium, Miletus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamos and Mitylene, all of them within a distance of about one hundred miles, might well require all his waning strength. To seven of these churches he addressed those letters dictated by our Lord, and recorded in

the Revelations. Those churches, so flourishing and prosperous at that time, were a few centuries later extinct, and the cities themselves are nearly all now in ruins.

The journeyings of Peter outside of Palestine were perhaps less extensive than those of Paul. He was often at Antioch, was probably for a time in Corinth, from which he departed in consequence of the attempt of Jewish partisans to make out that there was a conflict between his teachings and those of Paul. There is a possibility, but very little probability, that he visited Rome at this time; his later years were spent in Mesopotamia, probably in Edessa and Nisibis, where he is said to have founded schools of Christian disciples, and in Babylon, from whence his epistles were written. In the year of his death he was taken to Rome, where, after being at liberty for a short time, he was sentenced to death, and was crucified, tradition says, with his head downward. His intercourse with Paul, in the later years of his ministry, was frequent and cordial. There is no reason to suppose, indeed, that it was ever otherwise, except on the occasion at Antioch, when Paul, though much younger, "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Galatians ii. 11–19.

Of the journeyings and missionary labors of the other apostles we have no certain knowledge. Two of them, James, the son of Zebedee, and James, the brother of our Lord, died in Jerusalem, one slain by Herod Agrippa I., the other by the Jews. Jude, the brother of James, from certain passages in his epistle, is supposed to have been with or near Peter in Mesopotamia. Of the rest we have only vague and conflicting traditions.



# THE EPISTLES:

ARE letters, either to particular persons or churches; or, are what is sometimes called "circular letters" to the churches in general. It is believed they were all written by apostice; and, indeed, each has the name of an apostic affixed to it, excepting that to the Hebrews, and the two ascribed to John. Paul is named as the writer of thirteen of them. The epistles were certainly divinely inspired. The churches, in the early times, received them as the word of God; and neither heretics nor opposers of the ancient churches denied that they were the genuine writings of the apostics, and the plain truths of Christianity. All the epistles, excepting the several mentioned above, begin with the names of the writer, and of those to whom the epistle is addressed; then follows the salutation; then the lutter; and then the individual messages. It is everywhere agreed to that this part of the New Testament shows the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies even more than what is called the historical part. These epistles also contain a number of wonderful prophecies, thus proving that they were inspired by our God, who alone sees the end from the beginning.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

HIS Epistle is placed first in the list of the Epistles, probably because Rome was a place of very great importance, but the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and the first Epistle to Timothy, that to Titus, and perhaps some others, were all written before it.

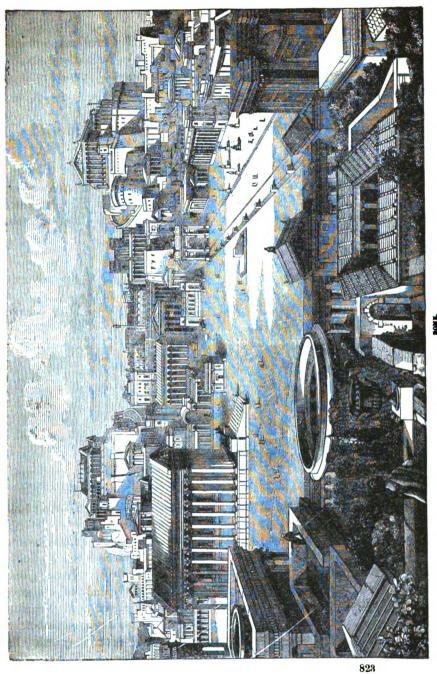
It is generally thought that the apostle Paul had never seen the Roman Christians when he wrote to them, but he felt a great interest in them; and they must have loved him much for it, for they travelled from thirty to fifty miles from

that city to meet him, when he was going as a prisoner there.

You are not to suppose from the title, that the people to whom this Epistle was written were native Romans; some of them were so, and were converted from heathenism—but they were merely persons dwelling in Rome, most of whom were converted Jews. The apostle calls them neither Jews nor Romans, but addressed them, as "all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints."

The chief design of this Epistle was to show these dwellers at Rome and us, how a poor sinner may be justified or accounted righteous and good in the sight of God. Then, as in the other Epistles, after having explained

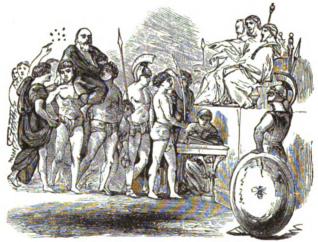
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the grand subject he had in his mind, he exhorts the Christians to practise various duties. These duties are named frequently in his various Epistles, and are such as, obedience to parents and rulers, respect to ministers, kindness and charity toward each other, and love to all saints.

# THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

ORINTH has been noticed when we treated on the Acts. It was a large and crowded city, and the capital or chief city of Achaia; and Achaia was a province of Greece. The apostle Paul was at this place about two years, and having converted many Jews and Gentiles, and left them



VICTOR IN THE RACES RECEIVING HIS CROWN.

united together in a Christian church, he now wrote to them to correct some wrong things which he heard were practised among them.

Corinth was celebrated for its games, called the Isthmian games, because the place itself stood on an isthmus, or neck of land joining it to a continent, or very great extent of land, containing many countries. These games were practised every fourth year. There were other games of a similar kind celebrated in Greece, called the Olympic, Pythean, and Nemæan. Those who engaged in these games were trained for twelve months before; and they had suitable food and exercise, to prevent them from growing too fat, or too indolent, and so becoming unfit to endure the hardships they had

to undergo; for they had to run, to wrestle, to leap, and to box. The boxers used their arms, frequently beating the air, as if they were beating their opponents, that so they might be skilful and strong. The path of the racers was marked out by white lines, or posts; he who did not keep within them, though he was first at the goal, or winning post, lost the prize. Garlands or crowns made of pine leaves, olives, laurel, and parsley, were given to the conquerors by the judges appointed to decide who had won; and other honors and privileges belonged to them. Large numbers of spectators were present to see these games, which drew as much attention in Greece as the greatest sights do among us.

The apostle Paul often alludes to these games, to show how much the Christian should struggle, by prayer, self-denial, and other means, against sin, in order to obtain superior honors. So you will, from knowing what has been here mentioned about them, understand his meaning in many parts of his Epistles, where otherwise it would not have appeared quite plain. The following texts are among those in which the apostle alludes to these games. 1 Cor. ix. 24, Gal. v. 7, Phil. ii. 16, iii. 13, 14, Heb. xii. 1.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.

ALATIA was a province of Asia Minor, and this Epistle was not written to the inhabitants of any particular city or town, but to the Christians in the whole province. It is not certain by whom their several churches were founded, but it is thought probable that they were founded by the apostle. The reason why the Epistle was written was this: some converted Jews had joined the Galatians, and not having a clear knowledge of the gospel of Christ had taught them they must, in becoming Christians, attend to some things which were peculiar to the religion of the Jews. Now as Christ had done away with all the rites of the Jewish Church, which were only shadows or types and figures of the spiritual worship of his new church, this was a great mistake; and the apostle wrote to correct it.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

OME account of the city of Ephesus has been given in the remarks on the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. The apostle Paul went to this city after he had been at Corinth, but he made only a short stay. The next time he visited it he found twelve disciples, and made many more. He continued two or three years, and formed a Christian church, to whom this

Epistle was written. The apostle foresaw that teachers of untruths would spring up after his death, and his design in writing to the Ephesians was to fix their minds in the pure truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

YOU read something about Philippi in the commentary on the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Philippi was a Roman colony, which had, for several reasons, received great favors from the Roman emperors and senate. It was situated in Macedonia, a country near Greece. The gospel was first preached here by the apostle Paul. The design of this Epistle was to exhort the Philippians to live in love towards each other, and to comfort them under those troubles which they were called to endure from the persecutors of the Christians.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS.

OLOSSE was a city in Asia Minor, which perished by an earthquake with several other cities. Soon after this Epistle was written a new city was built on its ruins. It is not known how the Christian faith reached this place, and it is thought by some that the apostle Paul was not known there in person, because in the second chapter and first verse, he seems to imply that they had not seen his face in the flesh; but this language is not quite certain, and does not exactly state any such thing. Some, therefore, think, that the apostle Paul did preach here, for during three years that he dwelt at Ephesus, he employed himself with so much zeal and diligence, that we are told in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, that "all they that dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." This, like some of the Epistles, is chiefly written to warn against making mistakes in religion, and to encourage to constancy in the profession of faith in Christ. It is to be noticed, that this Epistle, and that to the Ephesians, are very much alike, from which it is thought that they were both written at the same time, while the same inspired thoughts were fresh on the mind of the apostle.

#### THE FIRST & SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THESSALONICA was a very large and flourishing city, where trade was free, and the capital of Macedonia. The place is now called Salonica. Here the apostle came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed

there about three weeks, and preached every Sabbath-day. Many Jews, Greeks, and chief women of the place readily received the glad tidings of salvation, which he declared, and the foundation was laid of a gospel church. The wicked Jews, who despised the apostle's message, raised a mob, and assaulted the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas were, and they were sent away for safety by night out of the city. Timothy was soon after sent by the apostles to comfort and instruct the converts at this city. He was pleased with what he saw, and took back to the apostle a report of the faith and charity which appeared among the Thessalonians. The apostle then wrote the First Epistle, and some months afterwards he also wrote a Second, comforting the Christians in their troubles, and urging them to hold fast their profession.

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was remarkable for his early piety and acquaintance with the Scriptures. The apostle in writing to him says, "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." His mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, and his father was a Greek. When in his travels the apostle Paul came from Antioch the second time to Lystra, Timothy was so warmly recommended to him by the church in that place, that he took him with him as a travelling companion. He was set apart for the work of an Evangelist, in order to be a fellow-laborer with Paul in preaching the gospel. The apostle evidently had a tender regard for him, and these Epistles were written to him to give him useful advice in the work of the ministry.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

TITUS was a Greek, to whom the apostle Paul had been the honored messenger of preaching the Gospel, and he had not received it in vain. Paul dearly loved him, and employed him much in assisting him to do his work; we read of his sending him to Corinth, to finish a collection there to assist the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to Dalmatia, to inquire after the saints there, and to comfort them. We do not read in the apostle's history that he was ever at Crete, but from this Epistle it is thought that he was, for he says to Titus, "I left thee at Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders, or ministers, in every city, as I had appointed thee." Crete is the largest island in the Mediterranean

Sea, and is now called Candia. This island has a considerable number of inhabitants, and is remarkable for producing no ferocious or poisonous creature. This Epistle was evidently written to teach Titus how to choose good men for pastors, and how to act himself as a minister of Jesus Christ.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

THIS is a very short, but a very interesting Epistle. It is, in fact, a story about Onesimus, a converted slave, who ran away from his master Philemon, whom some think he robbed, and then went to Rome, where he heard the apostle Paul preach, when his heart was changed. The kind apostle then wrote this most tender Epistle to Philemon, whom he knew, begging him to take his slave back into his service, for he was now become a truly good man, and what loss he had sustained by his absence the apostle assured Philemon he was quite ready to pay. It is supposed that Philemon lived at Colosse.

#### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS does not bear the name of the apostle Paul, but, if not written by him, it manifests much of his spirit. The design of writing it was to explain to them, the converted Hebrews, or Jews, the superiority of Christ to Moses, to Joshua, or Aaron; to prove that in his priesthood and death, all the work of the priests was completed, that he had made a perfect offering for sin, and that from henceforth there was no other way in which salvation could be expected but through Christ. With these remarks you will be able to understand the general scope of this Epistle, many things to which it refers having been explained when we were treating on the book of Leviticus.

#### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THE Epistle of James is called "general," because it was not written to any particular person. It was addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." These were not Christian Jews scattered abroad by persecution, but Jews who had been scattered over all countries by the captivity, numbers of whom never returned in consequence of Cyrus's decree, but remained among the Gentiles. The author of this Epistle is thought to be James the brother or Jude, and is known by the name of James the Less, probably because he was less in stature, or younger than

James the son of Zebedee, who was slain by Herod. Some of the Jews here addressed were pious men, and some not. This is clear from the different sorts of address which we find in the Epistle, some consoling and comforting, others warning and rebuking.

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES GENERAL OF PETER.

THESE Epistles, like that of James, were addressed to scattered Jews, "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These might include some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by the Assyrians, and of the two tribes carried captive by the Babylonians; but more especially are the Epistles addressed to suffering Christians, chiefly converted Jews, and some Gentiles, who were scattered abroad in the early persecutions of the Christian Church.

The apostle Peter was more especially sent to minister to the Jews, as the apostle Paul was to the Gentiles; and Peter meeting with a faithful brother, Sylvanus, who had been the companion of Paul, takes an opportunity of sending a letter by him, chiefly addressed to the converted Jews, dispersed among the Gentile countries, where he with Paul and others travelled; the design of which was to show that both taught the same glorious doctrines. This was the First Epistle.

The Second Epistle was to urge those to whom the apostle wrote to be anxious after divine knowledge, to fix their minds on the gospel, to guard them against teachers that would instruct them in error, and to warn them of the approaching end of all things.

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

THE author of this Epistle was John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved: he was the youngest of the apostles, and survived them all. It was called "general," because it was not sent to any particular church or person. The design of writing it was to promote brotherly love, to warn against doctrines that allowed men to live in sin, and give clear notions of the nature of God, and the divine glory of Jesus Christ. There is an anecdote of this apostle worthy of being remembered, both by young and old, whom the venerable John was used to address alike by the tender names of little children. It is said, in some early histories, that he spent his last days at Ephesus, where he died; and then when he was too old to

walk, he was carried to the place of worship in the arms of some of the disciples. He could then only speak a few words very feebly; and these words always were, "Little children, love one another."

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THIS, you see, is not called "general." It was written to a pious lady. The scope of it is to urge this pious lady to hold fast her Christian faith, to avoid error, and to love God and those who loved him.

#### THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THIS Epistle was to a particular person also. His name was Gaius or Caius, and, most likely, the same mentioned by the apostle Paul for his kindness in receiving, and lodging, and entertaining good people. See the sixteenth chapter of Romans, near the end. In this Epistle, John speaks of one "Diotrephes," who was a very haughty man, which was not a proper mark of a Christian, and of one "Demetrius," who had a good report of all men, as every Christian should have, as far as respects his life, temper, and behavior. The former he mentions, that Gaius may not imitate him; and the latter he holds up as an excellent example. We should always imitate the example of the truly wise and good.

#### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

THIS is also an epistle written to no particular person, but chiefly designed for the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ. Jude, or rather Judas, was the son of Alpheus, and brother of James the Less, or the younger. He was also called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus, for it was a frequent custom in those days to have two or more names; so Peter was sometimes called Simon, and sometimes Cephas.



SEALS AND SCROLLS OF ENGINNING OF OUR REAL

## REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE:

On, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," etc., "unto his servant John," as is told us in the first verse of the first chapter. It was written by John, and divinely given to him to show the prophetic history of Christ's church in the world to the end. Many things in this book seem dark and hard to understand, because they tell of things that have not yet happened; but if we will read and study devoutly, we will gather as much of instruction from them as the old Jews did from their prophetic writings—enough to cause us to praise God, and cling closer to our glorified Saviour in love and worship. The descriptions given in this book of our Heavenly Father and his kingdom, of our Messiah King and his glory, of the eternal joys and grandeur belonging to his followers, as well as of the confusion and terrible ruin of the wicked, are highly interesting, and will call for the healthful thought and inquiry, even in the minds of careless readers; whereas the devoted, humble, and prayerful will be improved by a continual insight into new and fresh truths of the most comforting nature.

OMITIAN, a Roman tyrant, banished the apostle John for being a Christian, to a solitary and rocky island called Patmos, about thirty miles from the western coast of Asia Minor. The good man is never alone, for God is with him everywhere. Here God favored John with wonderful visions of what should hereafter happen to the Church and the world.

The first three chapters of this book contain a sort of preface, addressed to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor; namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis,

Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The remaining chapters are accounts of his vision.

We shall first notice the Seven Churches in Asia. These were not the only Churches in Asia Minor; for there were Churches in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, etc., etc., which were also in Asia Minor; but the apostle knew and wrote to these Seven Churches in particular. The first was *Ephesus*, of which we have made mention on several occasions. The second is still known as *Smyrna*, the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It contains about one hundred and ninety thousand inhabitants, the largest number of which are Greeks, the rest are Turks, Jews (of whom there are eleven thousand), Armenians, Roman Catholics, and Protestants. It is a beautiful city, but frequently ravaged by the plague, and has suffered by repeated earthquakes.

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The third Church named is that of *Pergamos*. This city is now called Bergamo. It must in John's time have been a city of great importance, for it then had a manuscript library of two hundred thousand volumes, which Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, sent to Alexandria. It has now fourteen thousand inhabitants of different nations, but the houses are of wood, and look small and mean.

The fourth Church named is *Thyatira*. This place is situated in the midst of an extensive plain, which is nearly surrounded by mountains. Its houses are low, and chiefly of mud or earth. It now looks poor and mean. It was anciently, and still is, famous for dyeing, especially in scarlet.

The fifth Church mentioned is Sardis. This famed city was once the capital of King Crossus, the richest monarch that ever lived. He was defeated in the plain before the city by Cyrus, when it passed to the Persians. After the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great, it surrendered to him, and then in time to the Romans. It was destroyed by a terrible earthquake in the reign of Tiberias, the Roman Emperor, who rebuilt it. Afterwards the different nations of Goths, Saracens, and Turks, one after another, ruined it in their wars, and it is nothing but desolation. A mere sprinkle of ruins of its former greatness remains. No Christians dwell on the spot; two Greeks only were lately living there to work a mill, and a few wretched Turkish huts were scattered among the ruins.

The sixth Church addressed was in *Philadelphia*. The Turks call this place Allah Shehr, or "city of God." There are now about three thousand houses on the spot, covering a space of ground running up the slope of three or four hills. The streets are filthy and the houses mean.

The seventh Church was that of Laodicea. There were two places so called in Asia Minor. This place is more desolate than any of the others, having been completely ruined by earthquakes. Its ruins cover three or four small hills, and are of very great extent, consisting of an aqueduct, theatre, amphitheatre, and other public buildings.

Some remarkable fulfilments of what God said by the apostle John must also be noticed.

The Ephesians had gone back in their religion, which is what is meant by leaving their first love. God threatened them by his prophet, and he told them that he would remove their "candlestick out of its place," if they did not repent. By this he meant, that he would take the light of the gospel away from them; and he did so. Ephesus is now a forlorn spot—it is no more. Its ruins are of yast extent.

Smyrna was mentioned in terms of approval, and no judgment was denounced against it. So, though they have but little gospel light, yet the candlestick has not been wholly removed out of its place, and the city itself . is still large and flourishing. Of this Church, the venerable Polycarp was one of the pastors. In the year one hundred and sixty-two, about seventy years after this Epistle was written, a persecution broke out against the Christians at Smyrna; and the Roman Emperors, who had then dominion of those parts, treated them with shocking cruelty because they would not serve their idols. The grey-headed Polycarp was marked for destruction His friends concealed him in a village, but they were put to the torture to make them tell where he could be found. The old man could not bear that they should all suffer for him, and delivered himself up, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." When he was brought before the proconsul, one of the governors of Smyrna wished him not to be injured, and, when he was examined, made signs that he should deny he was Polycarp, but Polycarp would not tell a falsehood. He then urged him to deny Christ, and promised him safety. "No," said the brave old man, "fourscore and six years have I served Christ; neither hath he ever wronged me at any time; how then can I deny my Saviour and King?" He was threatened with being thrown to the wild beasts, being burned and tormented, but he stood unmoved, saying, "You threaten me with fire, which shall last but an hour, and is quickly quenched; but you are ignorant of the everlasting fire of the day of judgment, and of those endless torments which are reserved for the wicked! But why do you delay? appoint me what death you please." The proconsul was astonished. He then commanded the crier to proclaim three times that Polycarp owned himself a Christian, and he was sentenced to the flames. In the midst of the flames he thus prayed to his Father in heaven: "O God! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and through whom we have received the knowledge of thee! O God, the Creator of all things, upon thee I call, thee I confess to be the true God; thee I glorify! O Lord, receive me, and make me a partaker of the resurrection of thy saints, through the merits of our Great High Priest, thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever, Amen." Here was courage more than mortal; God helping his servant to put on the martyr's crown: and here was fulfilled what God said to Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The rest of this book is very difficult to explain, and can only in part be

understood by those who are of riper years, and who well study and pray over it. We have already said, on the Prophecies, that they are written in dark terms, on purpose, because otherwise all the world would know them; and they are only designed to be a guide to those who wish to know the mind of God, and to mark his providence in his dealings with his Church.

We cannot therefore attempt to do more than to tell you, that most of the language here used is the language of signs; that is, certain things are used to signify other things. John in his inspired visions saw all that he states; but then what he saw only represented realities in other forms.

In the eighth chapter, the seven seals which were opened, and the seven trumpets which were to be blown, are descriptions of seven periods of Christ's Church on earth, and of the divisions of those periods. They tell of the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world—of the triumphs of Paganism, and rise and fall of Popery, and other great errors; of the final triumph of the Gospel; the happy state of the Church of Christ; the Day of Judgment, and the eternal blessedness of the saints.

May we, dear young readers, be found among the happy number, adoring Jesus, "the Lamb of God," who died for sinners, and singing forever, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and anto the Lamb!" And may we, more than this, so try to do and finish our life's work that we shall reap the reward set before us in one of the most beautiful of the Old Testament prophecies: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

# St. John, the Beloved Disciple:

The Apostle, Prophet, and Evangelist: His Life, Character, and Example:

N this wonderful book, the New Testament, the life, the teachings, the sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the divine Redeemer, necessarily and appropriately occupy the first place; and are followed by a history of the origin and development of the church of the Redeemed, which he founded. But in his work and mission here on earth, and in the work which he committed to his disciples to be done after his ascension, we find three persons named with especial honor, and their labors narrated with particular care and minuteness.

These three were: Peter, bold, impulsive, warm-hearted, but fickle and wayward in his early career; the apostle of the circumcision; JOHN, ardent, manly, loving and beloved, and modest and retiring in his disposition; but with strong prejudices and ambitions; the man who had understanding of the visions of God; PAUL, stern, resolute, uncompromising, and heroic, yet tender and sympathizing with those who were in sorrow; the great apostle to the Gentiles. All of the three were apostles, though one received his commission from his risen and ascended Lord. All contributed to the number of the inspired books of the New Testament; Peter, according to generally received tradition, furnishing to his young companion, Mark, the material which was wrought so skilfully into the second gospel; and, in his later years, writing those two general epistles to the churches, which are so full of instruction, reproof, and consolation; John, writing, first, that remarkable collection of prophecies and warnings, which we know as the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, and, some twenty years later, the fourth gospel, so full in its demonstrations that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and, later still, when he had upon his head the snows of nearly a hundred

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years, those three epistles, which fitly and fully round out the gospel he had given to the church; Paul, in the midst of his arduous and incessant labors, writing thirteen and perhaps fourteen epistles to the churches which he had founded, and the individuals converted under his preaching; epistles which contain in themselves a whole body of divinity, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Thus, with the exception of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the Acts, the short Epistles of James and Jude, and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews, the whole New Testament was written by these three men, and the book of Acts is almost wholly occupied with the record of their labors.

Of these three mighty leaders of the sacramental host, the pillars of the early church, we have elsewhere given the principal particulars in the life of Peter; we have traced, in following the sacred record, the abundant labors, toils, sacrifices, trials, and triumphs, of the heroic and undaunted Paul; and it now only remains to us to portray, as well as we may, the exquisite beauty of the life and character of "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

In doing this we must of necessity go back to his birth and childhood, and see for ourselves what were the circumstances by which these were surrounded: for the early training has often much to do with the later character and life of the man.

Those of our readers who have become interested in our History of the Jews after the Captivity, and our History and Description of Palestine (both in this volume), will be aware that Galilee, the region in which James and John, Peter and Andrew, and indeed most of the apostles, were born, was, in the time of our Lord, very populous, and its population, far from being wholly Jewish, was made up of a great variety of nationalities. particularly true of the cities and towns around the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesaret, as it was often called. Here might be found, jostling each other in the narrow streets, Syrians from Damascus; Greeks from Antioch, Asia Minor and the Grecian isles; Arabs from the Eastern desert, on errands of plunder; Idumæans and Moabites from the regions around the Dead sea; the various tribes of Asia Minor, Galatians, Phrygians, Cappadocians, Cilicians, Lycaonians, Mysians and Ionians; and mingling with them as fishermen, carpenters, farmers, tent-makers, and sometimes bankers, taxgatherers, and usurers, the Jews, who here made up perhaps one-third or one-half of the population; while in the towns and villages of the hills they were much more numerous. Above all in power and authority,

though but few in number, were the hated Romans, the rulers of this mixed population.

But what the Galilean Jews lacked in numbers they made up in their ardent patriotism, and their abundant religious zeal. Though it was the habit of the proud and conceited Pharisees of Jerusalem to speak slightingly of the Galilean Jews, to ridicule their peculiar dialect, and to represent them as ignorant of the law, there was really no occasion for such reproaches. The Galilean Jew could generally speak Greek, while the Jew of Judæa was often ignorant of it; to the wider culture which he thus obtained, he added a most thorough knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which were taught, both in the families and synagogues of Galilee, more carefully than anywhere else in Palestine. There had also been made there very thorough provision for a good general education in all the studies of that time; and the rabbis of the temple at Jerusalem had established everywhere schools and colleges, for instruction in those traditions of the elders known as the oral or unwritten law, with which they sought to burden the consciences of devout Jews, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Nowhere in Palestine were there to be found men more zealous for the law, or more ready to suffer imprisonment, tortures, and death for their religion, than among the Jews of Galilee. And with them, religious zeal and the love of freedom went hand in hand. They were the brave and patriotic soldiers of the Maccabæan brothers, men who had no idea of defeat, and who would attack and conquer an army of ten times their number; men like Cromwell's Ironsides, who would go into battle singing the Psalms of David, while, with giant strokes, they hewed down their enemies. And when their country came under the power of the Romans, they were restless and constantly rising in insurrection. To them, the idea of a coming Messiah was ever present, and as they would only recognize the rule of God himself, through his priests, their idea of the Messiah was, that though he should possess divine, or at least arch-angelic attributes, he should be to his chosen people a deliverer from the Roman despotism, and should rule and reign over them, as a temporal prince, and high-priest on the throne of David, exalting to positions of trust and power in his kingdom or government, those devout and patriotic Jews whom he might select as best qualified for such a service. That the Messiah would be a spiritual prince, that his dominion was to be over the minds and souls of men; that he would have nothing to do with the administration of temporal power, and that the Gentile believer would enjoy equal privileges with the Jew, who trusted in

him, both in this life and the life to come, and that he was to redeem to himself a chosen people, a spiritual Israel, from all nations that dwelt on the face of the earth—were ideas which the Galilean Jew was incapable of comprehending, until his heart was enlightened from on high; and even then, he would ever and anon turn back to his old belief in a temporal Messiah.

The country or region of Galilee, which comprised the ancient territory of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali, was, in the time of our Lord, surpassingly beautiful. The combination of lake, river and sea, of elevated mountain slopes, broad fertile plains, and valleys clad in living green, made up landscapes of remarkable loveliness. The hills were terraced almost to their tops; and the latitude, which was that of Florida, was rendered more diverse in its temperature and its productions by the varying heights of surface found within a few miles. Little Hermon, the loftiest mountain west of the sea of Galilee, was about 4,000 feet above the sea; Tabor and Carmel, the one overlooking the sea of Galilee, the other the Mediterranean, were about 1,800 feet above the Mediterranean, while the sea of Galilee was 653 feet below that level. Yet the mountain slopes are not usually precipitous, and on some of these plains, valleys, and hillsides, were to be found the fruits, grains, flowers, and forest trees of most of the temperate and semi-tropical countries of the world.

In the small city of Bethsaida, on the northwest shore of the sea of Galilee, resided at this time two Jewish families, both strict observers of the law, and remarkable, even among their countrymen, for their patriotism and devotion. The names of the heads of these families were Jonas and Zebedee, or Zabdai, as his Jewish neighbors preferred to call him. Each had two sons; those of Jonas were named Simon, afterwards called also Peter or Cephas, and Andrew; those of Zabdai, James and John. family was abjectly poor; that of Zabdai was, for the time and place, comparatively wealthy; owning not only some property at Bethsaida, but also a dwelling at Jerusalem. Both, in accordance with the Jewish custom, that every man must have a trade or calling, pursued the business of fishing in the lake or sea of Galilee, at that time a profitable occupation, followed by many of the inhabitants on the shores of the lake. The sons of Jonas were somewhat older than those of Zabdai, but the two families were very inti-They were all taught to read the law before their sixth year, and were then sent to the synagogue school, where they remained till they were fourteen or sixteen, and acquired a good general education. If either of

the four ever attended the higher schools or colleges of the rabbis, of which there was one at Sepphoris, some eighteen miles away, and possibly one also at Capernaum, it must have been John, whose disposition for study was strongly marked, and who in later years was a scholar of good repute. they grew up the young men adopted the calling of their fathers, and were for a time in partnership. Of the two sons of Zabdai, James, the elder, was about the age of Jesus, while John was four or five years younger. Their mother, Salome, a woman of great energy and perseverance, and withal of an earnest and devotional spirit, was, according to the universal tradition of the early church, a kinswoman of Mary, the mother of our Lord. though there is a difference of opinion as to what was the exact relationship. Some believe her to have been a daughter of Joseph by a former wife, while others, with more probability, regard her as an elder sister of Mary. The intimacy between the two families may not have been kept up during the childhood of the sons of Zabdai, as Nazareth was among the hills, twelve or fifteen miles from Bethsaida; but that John, and probably James, were among the earliest disciples of Jesus, that Salome had become well acquainted with Jesus, and claimed from him the privileges of kinship for her sons, and that, apparently after her husband's death, she devoted her time and her property to ministrations to the bodily welfare of our Lord, and, with the constancy and love of a faithful woman's heart, followed him to the cross and the tomb, we know from the gospels.

John and his brother James had undoubtedly, in accordance with the custom of the devout Jews, gone up to the temple at Jerusalem at the great feasts, and especially at the passover, from the time they attained their twelfth year. The journey, the songs of their pilgrimage, the first sight of Jerusalem, and of the temple, which was then nearing its completion, the architectural beauty of the buildings of the holy city, and the grand sublimity of the temple worship, were all well adapted to impress deeply the thoughtful mind of a child like John, and these impressions would be rendered more permanent by his subsequent visits. That they did thus impress him is evident, not only from his eager inquiries of his Divine Master concerning the temple and the city, and their predicted destruction, but also in a greater degree from his vivid descriptions of the New Jerusalem, with its gates of pearl, its walls of precious stones, and its streets of gold, all written at a time when both the city and the temple of Jerusalem were tottering to their downfall.

But as they attained to the years of manhood, and the rumors began to

gather strength that the Messiah, so long promised, was coming, and was perhaps indeed already upon the earth; that the fulness of time had come. and that possibly from their own kindred (for rumors of the wonderful events at Nazareth could hardly have failed to reach the ears of Salome) was to spring that blessed one, the Hope of Israel, the expectation of whose birth had beautified and glorified the face of every mother of the tribe of Judah for centuries; these young men began to watch eagerly for the dawn of the Messianic day. In their early childhood had come into their own vicinity a brave, patriotic man, a hero of the Maccabæan type, Judas of Gaulonitis, oftener called Judas of Galilee; a man whom their fathers had hoped was he that should deliver Israel; and the sons of Galilee, ever eager for freedom, had gone out to swell his ranks by thousands, in the expectation that they should succeed in throwing off the Roman yoke; but the Roman legions under Cyrenius proved too strong for the unskilled insurgent leader, and he and his troops perished, or were scattered, at the first shock of battle. Would such a fate befall the coming, the promised Messiah? Not if he were indeed the chosen of God, the great deliverer, who, as they read the prophecies, was to be their champion against the Roman hosts. The blood thrilled through the veins of these sons of Zabdai, as they thought of the coming of this prince Messiah; for they were young and brave, they loved their country and their faith, and as Galilean Jews they were willing to fight to the death under a gallant leader, to throw off the Roman voke. and to restore the sway of Jehovah over the chosen people of God.

Tell me not that this fervid, warlike spirit is inconsistent with the character of the pure, gentle, lamb-like John! John was a Galilean and a Pharisee; to him there was no holier cause than that of insurrection against the hated Roman, no duty more sacred than that of fighting for his country, his faith, and his God. For these he would have fought to the death, would have endured the severest tortures, or suffered death on the cross. There was nothing weak, cowardly, or effeminate about this young man. We shall see evidence enough of this farther on.

But just at this time there comes intelligence to him which changes the whole current of his thoughts. A great prophet and reformer has appeared at the fords of the Jordan—perhaps the upper ford, only thirty-five or forty miles distant; he is urging upon the people that they should repent and be baptized as the indication of their purpose to begin a new life; and as a reason for this repentance and baptism, hitherto only required of proselytes to the Jewish faith, he tells them that the kingdom of heaven is at hand;

that the Messiah is coming speedily, and this repentance must precede his coming. This reformer's name is John, and because of his practice of baptizing he is called "John the Baptist;" he is of priestly family, though he does not himself engage in the work of the priesthood, but appears like one of the old prophets; most of all like Elijah, whom in his rough dress and his coarse and sparing diet, his earnestness, and his fearful denunciations of sin and hypocrisy, he strongly resembles. John, and Andrew, his friend and townsman, resolve at once to go and listen to this new prophet. Passing along the plain of Gennesaret, on the western shore of the lake, they soon come to the Jordan valley, with its rough and volcanic rocks, its frequent cataracts, and its thick jungle-like forests. By what road they find their way to the wider plain at the ford we know not, but they reach it at last, and listen with intense interest to the ringing appeals of this "voice from the wilderness." Their own life, which they had deemed so pure and blameless, now presents itself to them as full of sin; and with repentant hearts, and an earnest desire to do the will of God, they present themselves to the prophet for baptism. They are accepted, and seal their yows before God and men in the waters of the Jordan. To the major part of the multitudes who listened to the preaching of John the Baptist, his constant references to him who should come after him, one far mightier than himself, the latchet of whose sandals he was not worthy to unloose, were but imperfectly comprehended. They knew, indeed, that the Messiah was soon to come, and that these words probably referred to him, but they believed that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince; and while they were impressed with the earnestness of him who proclaimed himself as merely the forerunner of this Messiah, they half believed that he was himself the long predicted prince, and that ere long, casting away his rough robe of camel's hair, and abandoning his scanty desert-fare of locusts and wild honey. he would appear as the glorious Messiah, the King of kings; and till this transformation took place, having taken all the steps of preparation for his coming which they knew, the confession of their sins and baptism, they were content to await, at their own homes, the commencement of his reign. But there were some who—reverencing and honoring the son of Zacharias as a true prophet and the forerunner of the Messiah, and believing that his holy and abstemious life, his humble and devout spirit, and his evident consecration to the service of God, had given him a clearer insight into the mysteries of the future-desired a nearer intimacy with him, and sought from his lips fuller instruction and information concerning this coming

Among the most earnest and eager of these were the two young Galileans, John and Andrew, whom he had so recently baptized; and their simple and ingenuous natures, and their evident desire for instruction, won the heart of the great reformer. In his wild desert life, John the Baptist had been a zealous student of the Scriptures, and God had revealed to him. as he always does to those who seek wisdom from above in an humble spirit, much of the character and work of the Divine Redeemer. To him Jesus was the Light of the World, the Ancient of Days, the Judge who should discriminate between the wheat and the chaff, the pure and holy and the hypocritical. He did not fully comprehend the plan of salvation, but he knew that Jesus was the one sacrifice, the atoning lamb, whom all the sacrifices slain on Jewish altars typified, who should take away the sin of the All this and more he communicated, in the intervals of his preaching, to the two disciples, who drank in his words with the deepest interest. He told them, moreover, that, six or seven weeks before, there had come to him for baptism one whom from his wondrous grace and dignity he believed to be the Messiah, and that he at first refused to baptize him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" but that this gracious and God-like one had said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." "It had been revealed to him." he said, "that he should be able to recognize the Messiah when he should be called to baptize him, by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the semblance of a dove, and its resting upon his head." When he baptized this mysterious person, not only was there this manifestation of the descent of the Holy Spirit in visible form, but the heavens opened above him, and from out of the excellent glory there came a voice, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then John the Baptist knew that on him had been conferred the highest honor which had ever been bestowed on mortal man, that of administering baptism to the Son of God. And from this time he had ever been ready to testify that the Hope of Israel had come.

On the next day after this interview with the two disciples, Jesus, who had but just returned from the mount of the temptation, passed near where John was baptizing, and John immediately pointed him out to the wondering multitude with the impressive words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" He then explained briefly what he had already stated more fully to the two disciples, of the circumstances attending Christ's baptism. It is hardly probable that Andrew and John

were present on this occasion; but the next morning John was standing near the river's bank with the two disciples, and Jesus again passed, and he pointed him out to them, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." This was enough for them; their eyes were greeted with the sight of the longexpected Messiah. Eagerly, yet timidly, they followed his footsteps, and presently he turned and said to them in that gracious voice of his, "What seek ye?" Awe-struck, yet encouraged, they answer his question by another, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" His answer was still more gracious, "Come and see." Thus encouraged they followed to his temporary home, and as it was but ten o'clock in the morning,\* they had nearly the whole day for their interview with him. What a visit that was! How did the hearts of these young men burn within them as they realized that they had thus held converse with the Messiah, he whose coming patriarchs and prophets, kings and holy ones, in all the ages, had so longed to see, and yet had died without the sight. It does not seem that either John or Andrew ever doubted, from that time, that Jesus was the Messiah, though it was not till long after that they fully realized who and what the Messiah was.

Much as they had been drawn to John the Baptist, and greatly indebted as they were to him for thus bringing them to Christ, they had now found a new and higher love, a Master to whom they were drawn by a stronger and more enduring tie. Henceforward they were the disciples, not of John, but of Christ. And their zeal constrained them, as the love of Christ has always since done, to bring their friends to him. Andrew sought for his brother Simon, who was among the multitude who were listening to John, and having found him, brought him at once to Jesus, saying only, "We have found the Messias." Jesus welcomed him with a new name, Cephas, or, in its Greek translation, Peter. John, with that modesty which is one of his most beautiful traits, says nothing of his own efforts to bring his kindred to Christ, but we may well believe that if James was anywhere within his reach, at the fords of the Jordan, as he may very well have been, he did not rest till he had brought him also to Christ, with the announcement, "We have found the Messiah."

Jesus had determined the next day to leave Bethabara for his old home in Galilee, and his new disciples were delighted to accompany him. On

<sup>\*</sup> John says in his gospel, "It was about the tenth hour," but it is to be observed that, unlike the other evangelists (probably from the fact that his gospel was not written till some years after the destruction of Jerusalem), John always uses the Roman reckoning, which made the day begin at midnight, instead of the Jewish, which began at six o'clock in the morning

the way two more were added to their number, Philip and Nathanael, or Bartholomew, both afterwards apostles.

Immediately on his return to Galilee, Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding at Cana, a small town not far from Nazareth. Here was performed the miracle of changing the water into wine, of which John was an eye-witness, and which is recorded only by him. After this miracle Jesus went with his family and his disciples to Capernaum, then the principal city of the Gennesaret plain, and not far from Bethsaida. subsequently his Galilean home, and the place where many of his miracles were performed. His stay there at this time was brief, probably mainly for the purpose of joining one of the great earavans or companies which were going to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover. Their route would be, at this time, through the Jordan valley, at least from Bethshan or Scythopolis, in order to avoid going through Samaria. John had doubtless been often to Jerusalem at the season of the great feasts, but never before in such goodly company as at this time. As a constant companion of his Master, he was privileged to hear from his lips such words of wisdom and instruction "as never man spake;" and as they climbed the rugged cliffs from Jericho to Jerusalem, how his heart must have leaped for joy as the temple came in sight from the height of Olivet, for, for the first time in the world's history, could it be said that the vision and the words of the inspired prophet were about to be fulfilled, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." But, alas! though a few devout souls. like John, had recognized the Lord of the temple, and were prepared to give him their worship and homage, yet Israel did not know, his people did not The priests and Levites, who ministered at the altars and performed the service of the sanctuary, were wholly unaware that he, to whom that temple was dedicated, had come down from the temple not made with hands, and had deigned to grace this earthly house with his presence. came unto his own, and his own received him not. There was, however, one scene in connection with this passover feast, which made so vivid an impression upon John that, more than fifty years later, he describes it as if it had occurred but the day before. Jesus, on his arrival at Jerusalem. had entered the temple as its rightful heir. It was his Father's house, the one temple in the wide world consecrated to the pure worship of Jehovah: and yet there in its courts were lowing oxen, calves and heifers, sheep and goats, lambs and kids; and on one side great numbers of doves and pigeons. which the high-priest himself had caused to be brought there for sale from

his own extensive dove-cotes on the Mount of Olives; and the bargaining of the men who had these in charge with the eager worshippers created the greatest confusion; added to this was the babble of the money-changers, Jewish usurers, who made large commissions by exchanging shekels of the sanctuary, which alone could be paid for the temple dues, for the Roman, Greek, and other foreign coins, brought by the Jews of the dispersion who thronged to Jerusalem at these times from all parts of the Roman empire. All this traffic was forbidden by the law, but the Jews, and especially the priests, were proverbially greedy of gain, and Annas, the high-priest, cared more for gold than for the honor of God or the purity of the sanctuary.

All this desecration of the temple was apparent to Jesus at a glance, and it roused his righteous indignation. Seizing some of the small cords or bands of rushes, which bound the animals to be sacrificed, he plaited them into a scourge or whip, and as the dignity and sublime anger of the divine nature gleamed forth from those eyes, ordinarily so mild and gentle, he drove the animals and their owners out of the temple area, and into the streets of Jerusalem; poured out the changers' money, overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." The venders of this merchandise, and the money-changers, awe-struck by his evident right to command, and fearing to encounter those terrible eyes, fled in haste, and ventured no resistance or even remonstrance; and it was not till hours after that some of the priestly party, who had probably been heavy losers by this summary ejection, ventured, without questioning the righteousness of the transaction, to ask for some sign or proof of his authority to thus drive out those who desecrated the temple. His reply was a memorable one: "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up." The answer was an enigma to them; he who had called the world into existence could doubtless have reared anew the beautiful temple of Herod, in three days or three hours, had it been needful to do so, but there was a deeper and holier meaning to his words. The temple of Herod was but the outward covering or shell, in whose Holy of Holies, the Jews believed, was enshrined the divine Shechinah; so now he, the God whom they professed to worship, had come to earth in human form; his body, a nobler temple than that of Herod, enshrined the divine nature; and as they would, within a short time, destroy this human temple, he would demonstrate to them his divine authority, by raising it from the tomb in a more wondrous body within three days after its destruction. The saying was not forgotten by

the priests or by John, who had listened to it. The former sought to make it the ground of a charge against him, just before his crucifixion, of conspiracy to destroy the temple; while to John, after the event, it was seen to be a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ.

The miracles wrought by Jesus in the temple and in Jerusalem had attracted the attention of many of the ruling class; and one of them, Nicodemus, the teacher or "wise man" of the Sanhedrim, or great council of Jerusalem, the third officer in rank of that body, ventured to visit Jesus by night, during his stay in Jerusalem, impelled by a variety of motives. had admitted to himself, evidently, that Jesus might be the Messiah; if he should prove to be (and, like all the Pharisees, he had no other idea of the Messiah than that he was to be a temporal prince, and the deliverer of the Jewish nation from the Romans), there would be a fine opportunity for him, a counsellor, a Pharisee, and a man of learning and influence, by attaching himself thus early to his cause, to become one of the chief officers of his realm. There may have been, also, some desire to know more of this kingdom of heaven or of God, of which both Christ and John the Baptist had so much to say, and a lurking suspicion down in the depths of his heart that even he, with all his strictness of ritual observances, was not quite perfect, and that this great Teacher might be able to fill an aching void which he found in his heart. John was present at this interview, and his interesting narrative of Christ's method of laying bare the needs, cravings and experiences of a self-righteous soul, though written after the lapse of half a century, show that even then he had a very clear conception of the omniscience of his Divine Master. The stay of Jesus at Jerusalem was brief; he had declared himself as the Messiah, by his deeds and miracles, and had awakened the active enmity of the Pharisaic or priestly party thereby; and not being desirous of further provoking their hostility at this time, he withdrew quietly to one of the towns of Judæa, north of Jerusalem, where, very soon, the people flocked to him to receive instruction in even greater numbers than had attended the preaching of John the Baptist. Here, under his direction, his disciples, and John among the number, administered baptism to those who acknowledged him as the Messiah, and ere long his personal following had exceeded that of his forerunner. An incident which occurred at this time, and is recorded in the Gospel of John, indicates very clearly that neither jealousy nor envy had any place in the soul of John the Baptist. Some of his disciples, who had been having an angry discussion with the Pharisees about the oral law and the traditions of the rabbis, came to

John the Baptist with a grievance, which had evidently been aggravated by the taunts of their adversaries: "Rabbi," said they, "he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." John calmly replied, "that he had always declared that he was not the Christ, but only his forerunner; and that, as the Christ or Messiah was now come, his own mission was drawing to a close. Christ must increase, he must decrease, and that he rejoiced in this result." continued with an ascription of praise to Jesus, fully recognizing his divine nature and origin, and silencing forever the complaints of his disciples. Shortly after this, John the Baptist was seized and imprisoned in the castle Machærus by Herod Antipas, probably in part, at least, at the instigation of the Pharisees, and a few months later beheaded. The hostility of the enemies of Christ was so strongly manifested that he left his retreat, in the foot-hills of Mount Ephraim, and set out on his return to Galilee. "And he must needs go though Samaria." This was not the usual route from Judæa to Galilee, as the hatred which existed between the Jews and Samaritans was so intense, that it often led to bloodshed, and almost always to the withholding of all the courtesies of life between the two nations. The Jews, under John Hyrcanus, had burned the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, and the Samaritans, within a few years before the public ministry of our Lord, had by some means entered the temple at Jerusalem at night, and strewed dead men's bones in the holy place, and on the altar of sacrifice. It was therefore, undoubtedly, a surprise to John and the other disciples of Jesus, when he announced his determination to return to Galilee by way of Samaria. The sons of Zabdai and the sons of Jonas, as devout Jews. entertained, as in duty bound, the bitterest hatred of the Samaritans, and must have been reluctant to pass through their country; but they were too much attached to their Lord, to draw back from any peril to which he saw fit to expose himself.

It was on this journey, and during the absence of his disciples in the neighboring city to purchase provisions, that Jesus held that conversation with the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, which John has so faithfully reproduced, in the fourth chapter of his gospel, and the rehearsal of which he doubtless received from the lips of his Divine Master. Their journey was delayed for two days, while the first fruits of his labors in Samaria were gathered in, and the foundation laid for that extensive work of grace in Samaria, six or seven years later, when John and Peter reaped an abundant harvest.

The journey to Galilee was now resumed, and Jesus entered upon his beneficent work of preaching the gospel, and performing miracles of healing, and blessing the multitudes who thronged around him in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and the other populous towns of the plain of Gennesaret. home, at this time, was at Capernaum, whither Andrew and Peter certainly, and James and John probably, had removed. During this period of six or eight months, before Jesus again visited Jerusalem, he was very active. Beside his labors at the towns and cities around the lake, he had delivered his sermon on that mount which, from its double peak, was known as the Horns of Hattin; had visited and taught the people on the eastern and northeastern shores of the lake; had selected and commissioned his twelve apostles, and had made, either in person, or by his disciples, whom he sent out two and two, a circuit of the Galilean towns. In all this time. except possibly a very few weeks, John was his constant companion, and received, perhaps in larger measure than either of the other apostles, constant instruction from his lips. Peter, Andrew and James, who were next to him in their intimacy with their Lord, had for a time, and until they received a second call, resumed their former occupation; but after they were chosen apostles, they too were constantly in attendance upon him, or engaged in missionary labors, performed at his command. The two sons of Jonas and the two sons of Zabdai hold the first place in all the lists of the apostles, and were undoubtedly the first chosen by Jesus. Of the four, Peter, both from age and impulsiveness, was the acknowledged leader, though John was the most beloved and cherished. An English writer of great ability, Professor Plumptre, draws a very fine distinction between the relation which these two disciples held to the Lord: "Peter," he says, "was the friend of Christ as the Messiah, the first to acknowledge his divine character, and to adore him as the Son of God; John on the other hand was the friend of Jesus; clinging with the most intense affection to his humanity, and recognizing him as the incarnate Saviour." It is a somewhat remarkable commentary on these ideas, that the gospel, which is regarded as containing in substance Peter's narrative of the life of Christ, speaks of him most frequently as the Son of man, and is most definite in its descriptions of his earthly life; while the Gospel of John is almost wholly occupied with the demonstration of his divine nature. To John he is the "Son of God," "the Word who was with God and who was God," but who "was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Whatever we may think of this distinction, it cannot be denied that to

Peter, James and John was granted a closer special intimacy with their Master, than to any other of the apostles. They were with him in the chamber of death (Mark v. 37); in the glorious scene of the transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1); when he forewarned them of the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke xxi. 7); and in the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 36-56); John was the disciple who reclined next to Jesus at the passover feast, and at the Lord's supper then instituted; and it is noteworthy that when Jesus had declared to the twelve, in that sad hour, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," and the other disciples were questioning, "Lord, is it I?" as if in doubt of their own fidelity under the pressure of a terrible temptation, John, alone, of them all, does not ask this question; the union of soul between him and his Master is so complete that, as he himself said long afterward, in his first epistle, "perfect love casteth out fear." He knows that it is impossible for him to betray Christ, and though not boastful like Peter, he looks up frankly and lovingly into the eyes of Jesus, and when Peter, who understood the intimacy of his relation to Christ, beckons to him, he asks with perfect confidence, "Lord, who is it?"

And yet, we grieve to say, that ardent as was his love for Jesus, he could not maintain his watchfulness for even an hour, when his Lord was passing through that fearful agony in the garden of Gethsemane. This may have been the result of intense weariness and sorrow; to this cause Jesus, in mercy, attributed it; but he was more self-possessed and brave than any other of the disciples after the arrest of his Lord. He followed him to the palace of the high-priest, and having been in former years acquainted with the high-priest, he readily obtained admission, and seems to have been the only one of the disciples who witnessed the entire trial, both before the highpriest and before Pilate; for though Peter was, for a short time, in the anteroom of the palace, he was in such fear, and so frequent in his denials of Christ, that he could hardly be said to be a witness. John followed on to the cross, where again he was the only one of the twelve who was present, his companions being those noble women, who, more courageous than any of the chosen apostles, except John, were "last at the cross and earliest at the grave;" and it was there, amid his dying agonies, that Jesus committed to this faithful disciple, the sacred trust of caring for that dear mother whose heart was so rent with sorrow.

On the morning of the resurrection, when the first tidings came that the grave had been despoiled of its prey, John and Peter set out for the sepulchre, and for once John's zeal surpassed that of Peter, and out-running him,

he came first to the sepulchre. His recognition of his risen Lord was perfect, and in that memorable interview after the resurrection, at the sea of Galilee, his quick and loving eye detected his Master, before Peter or any other of the seven disciples, who were in the company. It was at this time that our Lord, by those searching questions, tested the love of Peter for him, and then revealed to him his future, with the martyr's pains and the martyr's crown, and to John the prolongation of his life beyond the period of Jerusalem's destruction.

But in thus rapidly glancing over the evidences of the intense love which filled the hearts alike of the disciple and his Master, we have passed over several incidents in his early training as an apostle, which show most conclusively that John's was no soft, impressible, plastic nature, which adapts itself readily to each new impress of a stronger mind, without possessing any positive character of its own. On the contrary he was a man of great energy, and of a fiery, ambitious nature, full of strong prejudices, retaining with great tenacity his early ideas, and even recurring to them again and again after their falsity had been demonstrated to him. That these traits of a wilful and perverse disposition were in the end so completely eradicated as to make him an example to the church in all ages, of all that was pure and lovely and of good report, is due, in the first place, to the moulding and controlling influence which Jesus exerted over him in a greater degree than over any other of his disciples; and, in the second place, to the affection which this intense love of Christ for him had developed in his soul, and which made it his highest ambition to do always those things which would please his Lord and Master. "We love him because he hath first loved ng"

He who "knew what was in man" better than any man could know, and who read the entire nature and history of every man who came into his presence at a glance, when he called James and John to be apostles, named them Boanerges, "sons of thunder," a title indicative of their character. They were not like the fleecy cloud, which melts and disappears when the sun's rays fall directly upon it, nor like those cloud-banks that lie athwart the western sky at the close of day, and clad, in hues of purple and gold and violet, make more beautiful the sun's decline; rather, they were the dark, threatening clouds, heavy with the coming rain, and from out whose jagged rifts, leap the live thunder and the swift lightning-stroke; vehement for the right, like the old prophets; men of strong, earnest, intense natures, who would "not handle the word of God," the truths which he

had revealed, "deceitfully." Very soon did they give evidence that the name he had bestowed upon them was not misapplied.

It was not till the two brothers had been for nearly a year under his training, that he sent them forth to preach and teach in the towns and villages of Galilee; and their first mission was one of many limitations. were not to enter any Samaritan or Gentile village; full well he knew their bitter hatred and contempt of the Samaritans; and though he had showed them, by his own labors in Samaria, that these despised people were not beyond the pale of his mercy, their prejudices were as yet too strong to make it safe to trust them, even with the gospel message, to those for whom they entertained such loathing; they were sent at this time only to their Jewish brethren, who were already to some extent informed concerning the character and mission of Christ; they were to proclaim him as the Messiah, and, where it was needful, to perform in his name the simpler miracles of healing. They knew and comprehended but little of the scheme of salvation, but what they knew they told correctly. On their return from this circuit, they came to Jesus, somewhat elated, not that so many had received the gospel message, but that the devils, the demons which had taken possession of the bodies of men, had been subject to them through his name. Gently rebuking their exuberant joy at this result of their labors, Jesus reminded them that they had occasion for a higher joy, that their names were written in heaven. They proceeded with their report, and here it is John that speaks, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us." Jesus said, "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me."

In their second mission the powers of the apostles were somewhat enlarged, and in a part, at least, of this circuit of Galilee, which extended also to Tyre and Sidon, and to the half-heathen villages of the eastern side of the lake, Jesus himself accompanied them. They saw the miracles which he did, heard his parables, and listened to his explanation of them, and were daily instructed by him in private; yet as they journeyed by his side, or followed in his footsteps, what was the most common theme of their discussion, and sometimes of angry debate? not the salvation of the souls of those to whom they proclaimed the gospel, not the overthrow of the powers of evil, or the banishment of the sins which were everywhere so rife. None of these. It was, which of them should be the greatest, should occupy the highest station in the coming reign of the Messiah, and receive

the highest rewards of money and power for their fidelity to Christ. said Peter, "we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have therefor?" The idea that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince, who should deliver them from the sway of the hated Romans, and should thereafter reign in great glory and power over the Jews, sitting on the throne of David, was thoroughly ingrained into their minds; Jesus, they were sure, was the Messiah, and they were daily looking for his assumption of kingly power; and when the multitudes were disposed, with loud acclaim, to take him by force and make him king, they were rejoiced, and wondered at his refusal to yield to their urgency. If he did, as they were persuaded he would, at last accept the offered throne, they, who had abandoned all to serve him, were entitled to the best places in his kingdom, and the only question was, what should be the division of the offices? It is painful to think that James and John, who had seen so much of the meek and humble spirit of Christ, who had so often been assured by him that his kingdom was not of this world, but that it was a rule and government over the hearts and minds of men, and that the whole nature must be renewed before any one could enter it, should have engaged in this unseemly wrangle; but so it Jesus had said, perhaps before this time, for the encouragement of the twelve, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Overlooking the wholly spiritual character of this promise, and regarding it solely as the guarantee of temporal advancement soon to come, the disciples looked forward eagerly to their several shares in the offered rewards. Among the twelve none had been nearer or apparently dearer to Christ, than the two sons of Zabdai, and their ambition was roused to obtain the highest places in this new kingdom.

Accordingly they communicated their wishes to their mother Salome, who had followed Christ throughout Galilee, and had ministered to him of her substance or property. The mother was not less ambitious for her sons than they were for themselves; and the three came to Jesus when he was alone and offered their request, the mother urging and the sons seconding it. At first she desired a certain thing of him, but seemed reluctant to name her request, but when Jesus said to her, "What wilt thou?" she answered, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the

other on the left, in thy kingdom." The immediate right and left hands of the monarch were the places of highest honor; and thus these two young men desired for themselves—for they repeated the request—the highest positions in that kingdom, which they persisted in believing he was about to found in Palestine. The reply of Jesus was a sterner rebuke than he had yet given to any of his disciples, yet it was administered in love. know not," he said, "what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Utterly ignorant of the sorrow and suffering which these significant words included, they replied confidently, "We are able." Jesus said unto them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." The other members of the apostolic band were very indignant at this request of the two brothers; not that they had any clearer ideas of the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ, but that they regarded this as an effort, on the part of James and John, to steal a march on them and prefer a prior claim to the dignitics of the new kingdom. And this was after these two disciples and Peter had witnessed the glories of the transfiguration, and but a few weeks, or months at the farthest, before his crucifixion!

We may notice, incidentally, that even the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord did not wholly dispel this idea of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah from the minds of his disciples. The two disciples who went to Emmaus, on the day of the resurrection, said to Jesus, of himself, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," that is, from the Roman power; and the question put by the eleven to our Lord, on the very day of his ascension, after having received from his lips the great commission, shows with what tenacity they still clung to the idea of a temporal kingdom: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?"

One more example of the fiery spirit and the abiding prejudices of James and John, will show how much need there was of a deeper sanctification in their hearts; when Jesus had commenced that last journey toward Jerusalem, which was to close with his arrest and crucifixion, he sent James and John into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for his stay over night; but the inhabitants, supposing that his intention was to go to Jerusalem, refused to receive him. This was churlish; yet had it occurred in any Jewish vil-

lage, the disciples would have found some excuse for it, but it was the hated Samaritans who had refused shelter to the Messiah; and the loyalty of the brothers to their Master joined with their hate of these people, and they asked, and we may easily believe that it was John who put the question: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village.

We might multiply these instances, which illustrate the narrow and sordid views which, at times, gained the ascendancy over the minds of the twelve disciples, and James and John nearly as much as the others, up to the very day of the ascension; but what we have already adduced are sufficient to show that, notwithstanding all the preaching and teaching of Christ, notwithstanding their daily personal intercourse with him for three years, and the powerful influence he exerted over them, they were still under the bondage of Jewish prejudices, of personal and unhallowed ambition, and of a zeal not according to knowledge. They were not as yet wholly sanctified nor consecrated for the work in which they were to engage. Our Lord knew this, and hence he commanded them to remain at Jerusalem, until they should receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

They obeyed, and after ten days of earnest prayer, the promised descent of the Holy Spirit came, and they were fitted to enter upon their great work. A wondrous change had come upon them all. They were in the city of Jerusalem, and it was the feast of Pentecost, one of the great Jewish feasts, when, from all parts of the Roman empire, the Jews of the dispersion came up to Jerusalem, and presented themselves at the temple. Fifty days before, these eleven apostles, and the believers who were now with them, had fled affrighted, at the arrest of their Master; far from attempting any resistance or rescue, they had concealed themselves, and met but stealthily, with barred and bolted doors, lest they also should suffer arrest. Their Master had been crucified by Roman authority, at the urgent solicitation of the Jewish Sanhedrim; and their hopes had fallen to the dust. But he had risen from the dead, and though he had not, as of old, led them through the streets of Jerusalem and the villages of Galilee, showing himself openly to the multitudes, his resurrection and his ascension had put new faith and courage into their hearts, and this mysterious but all powerful influence which they now experienced had consecrated them to their work, and they

were ready for any labor, any sacrifice, which might be required of them. The most timid of the apostolic band was now ready to face the Sanhedrim, or the Roman authorities, charge upon them the murder of Jesus, and defy their power. To the multitudes who throughd the Jewish capital, they preached boldly the crucified and risen Christ, and urged them to repent and believe on him.

And if this change had come upon all the disciples, it was especially marked in the case of Peter and John. Peter was, as before the crucifixion, the leader, but his boastful spirit was gone; he was meek and humble, yet full of zeal, courage and energy, and henceforth his chosen associate was John; together the two preached unto the people, administered baptism to the new converts, performed miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, charged home upon the rulers their responsibility for the death of Christ, stood undaunted before the Sanhedrim, endured their threatenings without alarm, and without yielding for a moment to their demands; suffered imprisonment, and were beaten with rods, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in and for the Master's name. Meanwhile, the church, which they, in accordance with their Master's command, had founded at Jerusalem, had grown so rapidly that it numbered many thousands of joyful believers; it was fully organized, and had been consecrated by the blood of its first martyr, and a violent persecution had scattered many of its prominent members; but Peter and John remained at Jerusalem, and cared for the remainder of the flock. Now came one of those questions which tested the completeness of the change wrought in them. Philip, one of the seven deacons (not the apostle), had left Jerusalem in consequence of the persecution, and gone to Samaria, where he had preached Christ with great success,-the recollection of the Saviour's visit there, undoubtedly rendering the people more ready to receive the gospel. He had baptized great numbers, and was in need of assistance. Thereupon, the church at Jerusalem sent their two chief pastors to aid Philip in his work. Peter and John hastened on this mission of love, received the Samaritans warmly as brethren in Christ, and ere they returned preached the gospel in many of the Samaritan villages. And yet this same John, only six years before, had desired to call down fire from heaven on one of these Samaritan villages for a real or fancied slight.

Other events, following thick and fast, gave evidence of the great change which had come upon these two apostles; Saul the persecutor had become Paul the apostle, and was received lovingly by John and Peter and James;

Peter had had his vision of the beasts let down from heaven, and its fulfilment, in the conversion and admission into the church of Cornelius, the Roman centurion; Herod Agrippa had seized and put to death James, the brother of John, and had then seized Peter, intending to kill him also, and martyrdom seemed to await John and the other apostles; but, unmoved by his personal danger, he and the whole church wrestled in prayer for Peter's deliverance, and it came. Peter left Jerusalem for a time, but John remained at his post, and the persecutor soon died.

For the next fifteen or twenty years we have but very slight record of the labors of John; he was not, probably, at the council at Jerusalem, which decided the important question of the relations between the Gentile churches and those composed of converted Jews, or we should have heard from him as well as from Peter; but, before their departure from Jerusalem, Paul speaks of John as having given the hand of fellowship to Barnabas and himself. John remained at Jerusalem, it is supposed, with occasional visits to other parts of the great field of labor before him, until perhaps A. D. 64, when the evidences of the speedy destruction of Jerusalem led the Christians there to obey the Saviour's command and flee to the mountains. Many of these, and probably the apostle among the number, took refuge in Pella, a mountain fastness on the east side of the Jordan, about eighteen miles south of the sea of Galilee. His stay here could not have been long, and having learned that, by the imprisonment of Paul, and possibly of Timothy also, the great church of Ephesus, as well as the other churches of the province of Asia, was left without a chief pastor, he departed for that city, sailing probably from Cæsarea some time in the year A. D. 65. Soon after his arrival at Ephesus he was, by the orders of Nero, banished to the little rocky islet of Patmos, about sixty miles southwest of Ephesus.\* His banishment lasted probably three or four years, terminating with the death of Nero. It was during his exile on this island that he wrote the Book of Revelation, in which, after detailing the view he had of his now glorified Master, a view far more sublime and overwhelming than that which he had witnessed on Mount Hermon at the transfiguration, though one in which he recognized at once his adorable Lord, he gives the messages received from him to the

<sup>\*</sup> This date accords with one tradition, though another makes the banishment to Patmos the result of some local persecution, and to have occurred several years later, and possibly in the time of Domitian. The date of the banishment really turns upon the question whether the Apocalypse or Revelation was written before or after the fall of Jerusalem. The weight of evidence seems to favor the idea that it was written before that event.



seven principal churches of the province of Asia, messages of warning, reproof, exhortation, and encouragement. In his subsequent visions he was permitted to see the glories of heaven, and to see and hear the events and judgments which were to come on the earth; before his eyes was unrolled the vision of the future progress of the church militant; the rise, growth, progress, and final destruction of the papal power; before him the judgment was set, and the books were opened; the dead, small and great, were raised from their graves, and the terrors of that fearful day were all portrayed; the names written in the Lamb's book of life were rehearsed in his hearing; the first resurrection, the millennial glories, the final destruction of the wicked, and the unspeakable and indescribable



THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

beauty of the new Jerusalem, illumined by the radiance which proceeded from the throne of God, whose walls were of precious stones, whose gates were pearls, and whose streets were of pure gold, were shown to his eager eyes. The river of the water of life, pure as crystal, its banks shaded by the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its fruit every month, the whole illuminated by the divine Light, and needing no temple, since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the only objects of worship, were also presented to his enraptured vision.

Little need we wonder that the rough and rocky island of Patmos lost all its roughness and discomfort to him in these visions, which transformed it into the very gate of heaven; nor that, when recalled to his apostolic work at Ephesus, he should have left with reluctance its rugged cliffs.

But there was yet much for him to do. Paul and Peter, his own brother James, and James, the Lord's brother, that James the Just who had so long and ably presided as the chief pastor of the church at Jerusalem, had all gone, through the martyr's chariot of fire, to their home above. To him there was given a longer service, more abundant trials, but at last a peaceful and quiet death. He probably returned to Ephesus about the beginning of the year A. D. 69, and though not far from sixty-eight years of age, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Vigorous and active, he visited in turn the fifteen or twenty churches of the province of Asia, counselled their pastors, and very possibly extended his apostolic labors to Crete, to Cenchrea, to Athens, to Corinth, and to the churches of Macedonia. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the wide dispersion of the Judæan Christians, many of whom migrated to Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, must have greatly increased his labors, since to most of them he was personally known.

There seems to be good reason to believe the testimony of the early fathers, some of whom were in direct communication with the now venerable apostle, that his gospel was written about A. D. 85 or 86, at the request of the elders of the church at Ephesus, who, though possessing the other gospels, desired to preserve his recollections of his beloved Master, and to obtain from him also those particulars which had not been recorded by the others. His own purpose in writing it seems to have been, not so much to supplement the other gospels, though he does this incidentally, as to prove. in this life of Jesus, that he was the Christ, the Son of God. God manifest in the flesh. Having this object in view, he divides his gospel into two parts: the first, extending from the first to the thirteenth chapter, consists of a series of proofs or signs that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, the appointed Saviour of the world; or, in other words, it is a record of what Jesus made known of himself to convince the unbelieving; the second part, extending from chapter thirteenth to the end of the book, consists of evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, derived from his intercourse and discourses in private with his chosen friends, and especially as seen in the great sacrifice offered by him, and its acceptance for the salvation of the world. When we consider that this gospel must have been written when he was eighty-five or eighty-six years old, and possibly nearer ninety; that its detail of these conversations and discourses of Christ is very clear and minute, and not marred in the slightest degree by the garrulity of old age, and that the style of its composition is superior, even, to that of the accomplished and learned Paul, while the Greek, in which it is written, is as pure as that of the best

classic Greek writers; we can come to no other conclusions than these: that John was intellectually a man of remarkable genius and extensive culture, and that he was especially inspired of the Holy Spirit to write this and the other books which he contributed to the New Testament.

The Gospel of John is, indeed, so far as any book or document can be, one of the main pillars of the Christian system. More than any other of the books of the New Testament it is devoted to the doctrines of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Trinity in unity, and hence it has been the citadel against which infidelity and rationalism have made their most vigorous and determined assaults; but they have assailed it in vain: it stands today unharmed, as it has stood through all the Christian ages, and as it shall continue to stand, until the last foe shall have hurled his last missile against it.

But, though already past the allotted age of man, John had still work to do for the Master he loved, and for the church of God. He was, it is supposed, past his ninetieth year when he wrote the three epistles which bear his name. They show on their pages evidence of advanced age, but not of senility or weakened mental powers. The theme of the first epistle is fellowship, the union of believers with God and his Son Jesus Christ, and their union with one another. Like all of John's writings, it is thoroughly systematic. He treats first of the nature of fellowship, in both its aspects; second, of its fruit, holiness; third, of its law, truth; fourth, of its life, love; fifth, of its root, faith. In reading it we are often reminded, by the vigor and almost explosive force of its language, that this old man, whose head has been whitened by the snows of almost a hundred winters, has not yet wholly lost that fiery zeal which gave him, in his youth, the title of Boanerges, a "son of thunder." His heart, great and loving as it is, has been sorely wounded by the professions of false disciples, who claim to be the children of God, and to be perfect and sinless, while their lives are impure and their hearts full of malice, bitterness and hate; and he denounces them in such terms as these: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. . . . If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . . He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. . . . Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Autichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.... He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever

hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The honor of his blessed Lord was assailed, and this loving and gentle disciple was roused to wrath and denunciation, as he was in his youth, when a word was said against him whom he loved. And yet, in other portions of this epistle, how tender and sweet is his spirit! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."... "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

The second and third epistles are short, and addressed to individual disciples. They were probably written at a date still later than the first, but breathe the same spirit.

The exact date of the death of the loving and venerable apostle is unknown; different authorities differing more than twenty years in their dates; but the most probable conjecture seems to be that he died at Ephesus, in the third or fourth year of Trajan, and after passing his hundredth year.

Jerome relates that when, in extreme old age, he was too weak to walk into the church, he was still borne thither; and unable to deliver a long discourse, he would lift his trembling hands and simply say, "Little children, love one another;" and repeat these words again and again. When asked why he constantly repeated this expression, his answer was, "Because this is the command of the Lord, and nothing is done unless this thing be done."

So passed away the last and most Christ-like of the apostles. From the day of his Lord's ascension to that in which he too joined the assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in the book of life, there is no stain or blemish on his character. His life, for that period of more than seventy years, was as pure and spotless as any recorded in the Scriptures, except only that of the Blessed One, to whom through life he clung in adoring love. Innumerable are the legends which have come down to us concerning this holy servant of God; some of them are absurd and puerile, and unworthy to be recorded, as they are totally at variance with his character. These are probably the inventions of idle monks, who, in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, spent their abundant leisure in the concoction of all manner of legends concerning the apostles, and even concerning Christ himself. A few are deserving of notice because of their apparent harmony with the spirit of the apostle, and because, from their earlier date, there is

a stronger possibility of their truth. Whether true or not, they are not inconsistent with his character.

The tradition of his shipwreck on his first voyage to Ephesus, when near that port, is not improbable, for the Ægean sea was often a tempestuous one, and its many rocky islands, and its harbors and roadsteads, so liable to be filled up with silt from the mountain streams, made shipwrecks there very frequent. The legend that he was taken to Rome, and, by the orders of Nero, or some other Roman tyrant, plunged in a caldron of boiling oil, from which he emerged entirely uninjured, rests only on the doubtful authority of Tertullian, and is believed by many of the most careful critics to be a misinter-pretation of the words of some earlier writer.

One of the most beautiful, as it is one of the most probable of these traditions, is that which relates that, as he was visiting the church at Pergamos, he saw a young man in the congregation to whom he was powerfully drawn, and that, turning to the pastor of the church, he said, "I commit this young man to you before Christ and the congregation." The minister accepted the charge, took the youth home, instructed, and finally baptized him. Subsequently he fell into bad company, led a profligate life, and at last, renouncing all his religious professions, joined a band of robbers, and became their captain. After some years John again visited Pergamos, and while there, made inquiry of the pastor concerning the young man whom he had committed to his charge. The minister sighed heavily, and his tears flowed, as he replied, "He is dead." "Dead!" said John; "in what way did he die?" "He is dead to God," answered the pastor; "he became godless, and finally a robber, and is now with his companions in the fastnesses of the mountains." The venerable apostle, hearing this, started at once, and saying, "I must go after this lost sheep," procured a horse and guide, and went to the mountain in which was the robbers' haunt. Being seized, as he had expected, by the band, he demanded to be carried into the presence of their captain. The outlaw chief, recognizing John as he approached, attempted to fly; but John hastened after him, crying, "Why do you flee from me? Stop! stop! Do not be afraid. If need be, I will lay down my life for you, as Christ laid down his life for us. Believe, Christ hath sent me to you." The robber stopped, threw away his arms, and began to tremble and weep bitterly. John finally led him back to the church, of which he subsequently became one of the pillars, demonstrating the genuineness of his penitence and conversion by his holy life and earnest zeal.

It remains that we should seek to ascertain what are the lessons to be drawn from the character and example of this beloved and eminently holy servant of Christ.

We have seen that, though possessed of rare gifts and of a tender and loving nature, he was in his youth impulsive, full of strong prejudices, and ambitious. Yet withal, there must have been something very attractive in him, some winning charm in his ways, which, with his strong affections and his pure and truthful disposition, drew the human heart of Jesus to him in a love which many waters could not quench. He was the most loyal to Jesus of all the disciples, and he gives this grand reason for his loyalty: "We love him because he hath first loved us." His fidelity to his Lord was unquestioned and unquestionable. No doubts of the perfect and abiding love which existed between them ever caused a shadow upon his brow, or for a moment beclouded his spirit.

And yet it required three years of instruction and training by the divine Master, and the death, resurrection, and ascension of that Master, to rid him of his expectations of the temporal reign of the Messiah, to overcome his narrow and bitter prejudices, and to control his vehement and passionate nature.

But when the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, had come, and imparted its sanctifying and elevating influences to his soul, he was created anew in Christ Jesus. He was no longer a Boanerges, a "son of thunder," but "a son of consolation." He had power with God and prevailed. Where miracles were needed for the confirmation of the truth, they were wrought in the name of his Master; but to those with whom he was brought in contact his pure and holy life was greater than any miracle. Both Peter and John had been with Jesus, as the Sanhedrim perceived (Acts iv. 13), and from him they had learned far better than the Jewish rabbis could have taught them, to rebuke sin, but to love and labor for the sinner; and by a pure and holy example to enforce the truths they preached.

We cannot suppose that any man, except our adorable Redeemer, has ever trod our earth who was perfectly free from sin, but it is worthy of notice that the inspired writers, who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, noticed so freely the errors and shortcomings of even the purest and holiest, and were most severe of all upon their own sins, nowhere, after the day of our Lord's ascension, pass a word of censure upon John. Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision, was led astray in his course in regard to the Jewish and Gentile disciples at Antioch; and even Paul, with his zealous

and fervent spirit and his overcoming faith, was not wholly exempt from those infirmities of the flesh, which at times led him to cry out, "Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But John dwelt perpetually in that higher atmosphere of the divine love. No cloud obscured the Sun of Righteousness from his vision; and cheered by its blessed rays, toil for his Lord was a delight, pain was a pleasure, and he could say with the poet:

"E'en sorrow, touched by thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Nor can we doubt that the visions of God which were set before him in Patmos were among the minor rewards, the "hundred-fold in this life," which were given to him for his unfaltering faith and his undying love for his Redeemer. To him, as to Daniel, the message might have come, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not."

And when this "disciple whom Jesus loved" was at last received into the mansion prepared for him above, does it transcend the grace of our blessed Lord to suppose, that the position which he ignorantly sought on earth, in the days of his early ambition, was reserved for him in the heavenly kingdom? That, having drank of the cup of Christ's earthly sufferings, and having undergone his baptism of sorrows, this saint of God, so greatly beloved, was called, not as a matter of right, nor because of any claim he could bring, but of the free grace of the Redeemer, to sit at his right hand, as one of the prime ministers of the now glorified and reigning Messiah? If cuch is his blessed lot, no seraph of the heavenly host will utter with more melodious notes the new song, or with a more reverent and adoring spirit will ascribe "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

The lessons of this beautiful life, then, are briefly these: That, however pure and amiable are our natural dispositions, we need to be taught of Christ, and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, before we can do our Master's work effectively.

That, since Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, the only measure of our love for him should be his love for us; and that the nearer we attain to a perfect and all-absorbing love for him, the fewer will be the clouds and doubts over our pathway, and the more perfect and complete our peace and joy.

That it is only to those who, by long and constant trust in Christ, have won this peace which passeth all understanding, that the heavens are opened and they are permitted to know the blessedness of the redeemed in glory, while they are still within this earthly tabernacle.

That if we would have an open and abundant entrance administered to us into the New Jerusalem above, we must imitate the example of the obedient, faithful, loving and holy John, and, like him, be known to all around us, as the disciples whom Jesus loves. God has promised, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

May God give to each of the readers of this book grace thus to overcome.



#### THE

# WONDERFUL LIFE.

BY

#### HESBA STRETTON,

AUTHOR OF "JESSICA'S FIRST PRAYER," "LOST GIP," "THE KING'S SERVANTS," BTO.

"His Name shall be called Wonderful."

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### PREFACE.

HE following slight and brief sketch is merely the story of the life and death of our Lord. It has been written for those who have not the leisure, or the books, needed for threading together the fragmentary and scattered incidents recorded in the Four Gospels. Of late years these records have been searched diligently for the smallest links, which might serve to complete the chain of those years passed amongst us by One who called himself the Son of man, and

did not refuse to be called the Son of God. This little book is intended only to present the result of these close investigations, made by many learned men, in a plain, continuous narrative, suitable for unlearned readers. There is nothing new in it. It would be difficult to write anything new of that Life, which has been studied and sifted for nearly nineteen hundred years.

The great mystery that surrounds Christ is left untouched. Neither love nor thought of ours can reach the heart of it, whilst still we see him as through a glass darkly. When we behold him as he is, face to face, then, and only then, shall we know fully what he was, and what he did for us. Whilst we strain our eyes to catch the mysterious vision, but dimly visible, we are in danger of becoming blind to that human, simple, homely life, spent amongst us as the pattern of our days. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." Happy they who are content with being known of God.

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## THE WONDERFUL LIFE.

# BOOK I. THE CARPENTER.

#### CHAPTER 1.

#### The Holy Land.

ERY far away from our own country lies the land where Jesus Christ was born. More than five thousand miles stretch between us and it, and those who wish to visit it must journey over sea and land to reach its shores. It rests in the very heart and centre of the Old World, with Asia, Europe, and Africa encircling it. A little land it is, only about two hundred miles in length, and but fifty miles broad from the Great sea, or the Mediterranean, on the west, to the river Jordan, on the east. But its hills and valleys, its dusty roads,

and green pastures, its vineyards and oliveyards, and its village-streets have been trodden by the feet of our Lord; and for us, as well as for the Jews, to whom God gave it, it is the Holy Land.

The country lies high, and forms a table-land, on which there are mountains of considerable height. Moses describes it as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year." The sky is cloudless, except in the end of autumn and in winter, and no moisture collects but in the form of dew. In former times vineyards and orchards climbed up the slopes of every hill, and the

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plains were covered with wheat and barley. It was densely peopled, far more so than our own country is now, and over all the land villages and towns were built, with farm-houses scattered between them. Herds of sheep and goats were pastured in the valleys, and on the barren mountains, where the vines and olives could not grow.

There are two lakes in Palestine, one in the northwest, the other southwest, with the river Jordan flowing between them, through a deep valley, sixty miles long. The southern lake is the Dead sea, or Sea of Death. No living creature can exist in its salt waters. The palm-trees carried down by the floods of Jordan are cast up again by the waves on the marshy shore, and lie strewn about it, bare and bleached, and crusted over with salt. Naked rocks close in the sea, with no verdure upon them; rarely is a bird seen to fly across it, whilst at the southern end, where there is a mountain, and pillars of rock-salt, white as snow, there always hangs a veil of mist, like smoke ascending up forever and ever into the blue sky above. As the brown and rapid stream of Jordan flows into it on the north, the waters will not mingle, but the salt waves foam against the fresh, sweet current of the river, as if to oppose its effort to bring some life into its desolate and barren depths.

The northern lake is called the sea of Galilee. Like the Dead sea, it lies in a deep basin, surrounded by hills; but this depth gives to it so warm and fertilizing a climate, that the shores are covered with a thick jungle of shrubs, especially of the oleander, with its rose-colored blossoms. Grassy slopes here and there lead up to the feet of the mountains. The deep blue waters are sweet, clear, and transparent, and in some places the waves ebb and flow over beds of flowers, which have crept down to the very margin of the lake. Flocks of birds build among the jungle, and water-fowl skim across the surface of the lake in myriads, for the water teems with fish. All the early hours of the morning the lark sings there merrily, and throughout the live-long day the moaning of the dove is heard. In former times, when the shores of the lake were crowded with villages, hundreds of boats and little ships with white sails sailed upon it, and all sorts of fruit and corn were cultivated on the western plain.

The Holy Land, in the time of our Lord, was divided into three provinces, almost into three countries, as distinct as England, Scotland, and Wales. In the south was Judæa, with the capital, Jerusalem, the Holy City, where the temple of the Jews was built, and where their king dwelt. The people of Judæa were more courtly and polished, and, perhaps, more

educated than the other Jews, for they lived nearer Jerusalem, where all the greatest and wisest men of the nation had their homes. Up in the north lay Galilee, inhabited by stronger and rougher men, whose work was harder and whose speech was harsher than their southern brethren, but whose spirit was more independent, and more ready to rebel against tyranny. Between those two districts, occupied by Jews, lay an unfriendly country, called Samaria, whose people were of a mixed race, descended from a colony of heathen who had been settled in the country seven hundred years before, and who had so largely intermarried with the Jews that they had often sought to become united with them as one nation. The Jews had steadily resisted this union, and now a feeling of bitter enmity existed between them, so that Galilee was shut off from Judæa by an alien country.

The great prosperity of the Jewish nation had passed away long before our Lord was born. An unpopular king, Herod, who did not belong to the royal house of David, was reigning; but he held his throne only upon sufferance from the great emperor of Rome, whose people had then subdued all the known world. As yet there were no Roman tax-gatherers in the land, but Herod paid tribute to Augustus, and this was raised by heavy taxes upon the people. All the country was full of murmuring, and discontent, and dread. But a secret hope was running deep down in every Jewish heart, helping them to bear their present burdens. The time was well-nigh fulfilled when, according to the prophets, a King of the house of David, greater than David in battle, and more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, should be born to the nation. Far away in Galilee, in the little villages among the hills, and the busy towns by the lake, and down in southern Judæa, in the beautiful capital, Jerusalem, and in the sacred cities of the priests, a whisper passed from one drooping spirit to another, "Patience! the kingdom of Messiah is at hand."

As the land of our Lord lies many hundreds of miles from us, so his life on this earth was passed hundreds of years ago. There are innumerable questions we long to ask, but there is no one to answer. Four little books, each one called a gospel, or the good tidings of Jesus Christ, are all we have to tell us of that most beautiful and most wondrous life. But whenever we name the date of the present year we are counting from the time when he was born. In reality, he was born three or four years earlier, and though the date is not exactly known, it is now most likely 1881, instead of 1878, years since Mary laid him, a new-born babe, in his lowly cradle of a manger in Bethlehem.

### CHAPTER II.

### Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

TERUSALEM was a city beautiful for situation, built on two ridges of rocky ground, with a deep valley between them. It was full of splendid palaces and towers, with aqueducts and bridges, and massive walk the stones of which are still a marvel for their size. Upon the ridge of Mount Zion stood the marble palaces of the king, his noblemen, and the high-priest; on the opposite and lower hill rose the temple, built of snowwhite marble, with cedar roofs, and parapets of gold, which, glistening in the bright sunshine and pure moonlight, could be seen from afar off in the clear, dry atmosphere of that eastern land. From ridge to ridge a magnificent viaduct was built, connecting the temple mount with Mount Zion and its streets of palaces.

Every Jew had a far more fervent and loyal affection for the temple than for the palace of the king. It was in fact the palace of their true King, Jehovah. Three times a year their law ordained a solemn feast to be held there, grander than the festivities of any earthly king. Troops of Jews came up to them from all parts of the country, even from northern Galilee, which was three or four days' journey distant, and from foreign lands, where emigrants had settled. It was a joyous crowd, and they were joyous times. Friends who had been long parted met once more together, and went up in glad companies to the house of their God. It has been reckoned that at the great feast, that of the Passover, nearly three millions of Jews thronged the streets and suburbs of the Holy City, most of whom had offerings and sacrifices to present in the temple; for nowhere else under the blue sky could any sacrifice be offered to the true God.

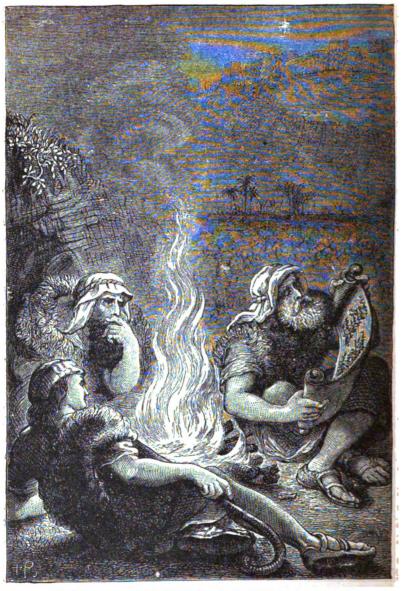
Even a beloved king held no place in the heart of the Jews beside their temple. But Herod, who was then reigning, was hateful to the people though he had rebuilt the temple for them with extraordinary splendor. He was cruel, revengeful, and cowardly, terribly jealous, and suspicious of all about him, so far as to have put to death his own wife and three of his sons. The crowds who came to the feasts carried the story of his tyranny to the remotest corners of his kingdom. He even offended his patron, the emperor of Rome; and the emperor had written to him a very sharp letter, saying that he had hitherto treated him as a friend, but now he should deal with him as an enemy. Augustus ordered that a tax should be levied on

the Jews, as in other conquered countries, and required from Herod a return of all his subjects who would be liable to the tax.

This command of the Roman emperor threw the whole nation into dis-The return was allowed to be made by Herod, not by the Romans themselves, and he proceeded to do it in the usual Jewish fashion. The registers of the Jews were carefully kept in the cities of their families, but the people were scattered throughout the country. It was therefore necessary to order every man to go to the city of his own family, there to answer to the register of his name and age, and to give in an account of the property he possessed. Resides this, he was required to take an oath to Cæsar and the king; a bitter trial to the Jews, who boasted, years afterwards. under a Roman governor, "We are a free people, and were never in bondage to any man." There must have been so much natural discontent felt at this requirement that it is not likely the winter season would be chosen for carrying it out. The best, because the least busy time of the year, would be after the olives and grapes were gathered, and before the season for sowing the corn came, which was in November. The Feast of Tabernacles was held at the close of the vintage, and fell about the end of September or beginning of October. It was the most joyous of all the feasts, and as the great national Day of Atonement immediately preceded it, it was probably very largely attended by the nation; and perhaps the gladness of the season might in some measure tend to counteract the discontent of the people.

But whether at the Feast of the Tabernacles, or later in the year, the whole Jewish nation was astir, marching to and fro to the cities of their families. At this very time a singular event befell a company of shepherds, who were watching their flocks by night in the open plain stretching some miles eastward from Bethlehem, a small village about six miles from Jerusalem. Bethlehem was the city of the house of David, and all the descendants of that beloved king were assembled to answer to their names on the register, and to be enrolled as Roman subjects. The shepherds had not yet brought in their flocks for the winter, and they were watching them with more than usual care, it may be, because of the unsettled state of the country, and the gathering together of so many strangers, not for a religious, but for a political purpose, which would include the lowest classes of the people, as well as the law-loving and law-abiding Jews.

No doubt this threatened taxing and compulsory oath of subjection had intensified the desire of the nation for the coming of the Messiah. Every man desires to be delivered from degradation and taxes, if he cares nothing



"And there were shepherds abiding in the fields."—Luke 11. 8. 874

about being saved from his sins. It was not safe to speak openly of the expected Messiah: but out on the wide plains, with the darkness shutting them in, the shepherds could while away the long chilly hours with talking of the events of the passing times, and of that promised king who, so their teachers said in secret, was soon, very soon to appear to crush their enemies.

But as the night wore on, when some of them were growing drowsy, and the talk had fallen into a few slow sentences spoken from time to time, a light, above the brightness of the sun, which had sunk below the horizon hours ago, shone all about them with a strange splendor. As soon as their dazzled eyes could bear the light, they saw within it a form as of an angel. Sore afraid they were as they caught sight of each other's faces in this terrible, unknown glory. But quickly the angel spoke to them, lest their terror should grow too great for them to hear aright.

"Fear not," he said, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, as the angel ended his message, the shepherds saw, standing with him in the glorious light, a great multitude of the blessed hosts that people heaven, who were singing a new song under the silent stars, which shone dimly in the far-off sky. Once before "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" because God had created a world. Now, at the birth of a child, in the little village close by, where many an angry Jew had lain down to a troubled sleep, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The sign given to the shepherds served as a guide to them. They were to find the new-born babe cradled in the manger, with no softer bed than the fodder of the cattle. Surely, the poorest mother in the humblest home in Bethlehem could provide better for her child. They must, then, seek the Messiah, just proclaimed to them, among the strangers who were sleeping in the village inn. All day long had parties of travellers been crossing the plain, and the shepherds would know very well that the little inn, which was built at the eastern part of the village, merely as a shelter for such chance passers-by, would be quite full. It was not a large building; for Bethlehem was too near to Jerusalem for many persons to tarry there for the night, instead of pressing forward to the Holy City. It was only on such an occasion as this that the inn was likely to be over-full.

But as the shepherds drew near the eastern gate, they probably saw the glimmering of a lamp near the inn. It is a very old tradition that our Lord was born in a cave; and this is quite probable. If the inn were built near to a cave, it would naturally be used by the travellers for storing away their food from the heavy night dews, although their mules and asses might stay out in the open air. A light in the cave would attract the shepherds to it, and there they found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. A plain working man, like themselves, his wife, and a helpless new-born child; how strangely this sight must have struck them, after the glory and mystery of the vision of angels they had just witnessed! How different was Mary's low, hushed voice as she pointed out the child born since the sun went down, from that chorus of glad song, when all the heavenly host sang praises to God.

A strange story they had to tell Mary of the vision they had just seen. She was feeling the first great gladness and joy of every mother over her child born into the world, but in Mary's case this joy was brightened beyond that of all other women, yet shadowed by the mystery of being the chosen mother of the Messiah. The shepherds' statement increased her gladness, and lifted her above the natural feeling of dishonor done to her child by the poor and lowly circumstances of his birth; whilst they, satisfied with the testimony of their own senses, having seen and heard for themselves, went away, and made known these singular and mysterious events. All who heard these things wondered at them; but as the shepherds were men of no account, and Joseph and Mary were poor strangers in the place, we may be sure there would be few to care about such a babe, in those days of vexation and tumult. Had the Messiah been born in a palace, and the vision of the heavenly host been witnessed by a company of the priests, the whole nation would have centred their hopes and expectations upon the child; and unless a whole series of miracles had been worked for his preservation the Roman conquerors would have destroyed both him and them. No miracle was wrought for the infant Christ, save that constant ministry of angels, sent forth to minister unto Him who was the Captain of salvation, even as they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

### CHAPTER III.

## In the Temple.

TOSEPH and Mary did not remain in the cave longer than could be helped. As soon as the unusual crowd of strangers was gone, they found some other dwelling-place, though not in the inn, which was intended for no more than a shelter for passing travellers. They had forty days to wait before Mary could go up to the temple to offer her sacrifice after the birth of her child, when also Joseph would present him to the Lord, according to the ancient law that every first-born child, which was a son, belonged especially to God. Joseph could not afford to live in idleness for six weeks; and as he had known beforehand that they must be detained in Bethlehem so long, he probably had carried with him his carpenter's tools, and now set about looking for work. It is likely that both he and Mary thought it best to bring up Jesus in Bethlehem, where he was born; for they must have known the prophecy that out of Bethlehem should come the Messiah. It was near to Jerusalem, and from his earliest years the child would become familiar with the temple, and its services and priests. It was not far from the hill country, where Zacharias and Elizabeth were living, whose son, born in their old age, was still only an infant of six months, but whose future mission was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. For every reason it would seem best to return no more to Nazareth, the obscure village in Galilee, but to settle in Bethlehem itself.

At the end of forty days, Mary went up to Jerusalem to offer her sacrifice, and Joseph to present the child, and pay the ransom of five shekels for him, without which the priests might claim him as a servant to do the menial work of the temple. They must have passed by the tomb of Rachel, who so many centuries before had died in giving birth to her son; and Mary, whose heart pondered over such things, may have whispered to herself as she clasped her child closer to her, "In Rama was a voice heard; lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." She did not know the full meaning of those words yet; but, amid her own wonderful happiness, she would sigh over Rachel's sorrow, little thinking that the prophecy linked it with the baby she was carrying in her arms.

At this time the temple was being rebuilt by Herod, in the most costly and magnificent manner, but we will keep the description of it until twelve

years later, when Jesus came to his first passover. Mary's offering of two turtle-doves, instead of a lamb and a turtle-dove, proves the poverty of Joseph, for only poor persons were allowed to substitute another turtle-dove or young pigeon for a lamb. These birds abound in the Holy Land, and were consequently of very small value. After she had made her offering, and before Joseph presented the child to the Lord, an old man, dwelling in Jerusalem, came into the temple. It had been revealed to him that he should not see death before his eyes had beheld the blessed vision of the Lord's Christ, for whom he had waited through many long years. Now, seeing this little child, he took him into his arms, and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Whilst Joseph and Mary wondered at these words, Simeon blessed them, and speaking to Mary alone, he continued: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

This was the first word of sorrow that had fallen upon Mary's ears since the angel had appeared to her, more than ten months before, in her lowly home in Nazareth. Hitherto, the great mystery that set her apart from all other women had been full of rapture only. Her song had been one of triumphant gladness, with not a single note of sorrow mingling with it. Her soul had magnified the Lord, because he had regarded her low estate; she was hungry, and he had filled her with good things. She had heard through the countless ages of the future all generations calling her blessed. A new, mysterious, tender life had been breathed through her, and she had been overshadowed by the Highest, whose shadow is brighter than all earthly joys and glories. Now, for forty days she had nursed the Holy Child, and no dimness had come across her rapture. Yet, when she brings the child to his Father's house, the first word of sorrow is spoken, and the first faint thrill of a mother's ready fears crept coldly into her heart.

So as they walked home in the cool of the day to Bethlehem, and passed again the tomb of Rachel, Mary would probably be pondering over the words of Simeon, and wondering what the sword was that would pierce her own soul. The first prick of that sharp anguish was soon to make itself felt.

Besides Simeon, Anna, a very aged prophetess, had seen the child, and both spoke of him to them that looked for redemption or deliverance in Jerusalem. Quietly, and in trusted circles, would this event be spoken of;

for all knew the extreme danger of calling the attention of Herod to such a matter. They were too familiar with the cowardice and cruelty of their king to let any rumor reach him of the birth of the Messiah. It does not appear, moreover, that either Simeon or Anna knew where he was to be found. But a remarkable circumstance, which came to pass soon after, exposed the child of Bethlehem to the very peril they prudently sought to shield him from, and destroyed the hopes of those who did not know that he escaped the danger.

## CHAPTER IV.

## The Wise Men.

A MONG the many travellers who visited Jerusalem, which was the most magnificent city of the East, there came at this time a party of distinguished strangers, who had journeyed from the far East. They were soon known to be both wise and wealthy; men who had given up their lives to learned and scientific studies, especially that of astronomy. They said they had seen, in their close and ceaseless scrutiny of the sky, a new star, which, for some reason not known to us, they connected with the distant land of Judæa, and called it the star of the King of the Jews.

There was an idea spread throughout all countries at that time that a personage of vast wisdom and power, a Deliverer, was about to be born among the Jews. These wise men at once set off for the capital of Judsea; for where else could the King of the Jews be born? Possibly they may have expected to find all the city astir with rejoicings; but they could not even get an answer to their question, "Where is he?" Those who had heard of him had kept the secret faithfully. But before long Herod was told of these extraordinary strangers, and their search for a new-born King, who was no child of his. He was an old man, nearly seventy, and in a wretched state, both of body and mind; tormented by his conscience, yet not guided by it, and ready for any measure of cunning and cruelty. All Jerusalem was troubled with him, for not the shrewdest man in Jerusalem could guess what Herod would do in any moment of rage.

Herod immediately sent for all the chief priests and scribes, who came together in much fear and consternation, and demanded of them where the Messiah should be born. They did not attempt to hesitate, or conceal the birth-place. If any of them had heard of the child of Bethlehem, and

Simeon's and Anna's statement concerning him, their dread of Herod was too powerful for them to risk their own lives in an attempt to shield him. "In Bethlehem," they answered promptly. Right glad would they be when Herod, satisfied with this information, dismissed them, and they went their way safe and sound to their houses. Thus at the outset the chief priests and scribes proved themselves unwilling to suffer anything for the Messiah, whose office it was to bring to them glory and dominion.

Privately, but courteously, Herod then sent for the wise men, and inquired of them diligently how long it was since the star appeared; and bade them seek the child in Bethlehem, and when they had found him to bring him word, that he might go and do homage to him also. There was nothing in the king's manner or words to arouse their suspicions of his real purpose, and no doubt they set out for Bethlehem with the intention of returning to Jerusalem.

Still it appeared likely that there would be some difficulty in discovering the child, of whom they knew nothing certainly, except that they were to search, and to search diligently, for him in Bethlehem. They rejoiced with exceeding great joy, therefore, when, as they left the walls of Jerusalem behind them in the evening dusk, they saw the star again hanging in the southern sky, and going before them on their way. No need now for guides, no need to wander up and down the streets, asking for the new-born King. The star, or meteor, stood over the humble house where the young child was, and, entering in, they saw him, with Mary, his mother, and fell down, doing him homage as the King whose star was even now shining above the lowly roof that sheltered him. There was no palace, no train of servants, no guard, save the poor carpenter, whose day's work was done, and who was watching over the young child; but they could not be mistaken. The future glorious King of the Jews was here.

They had not come from their distant country to seek a king empty-handed. Royal presents they had prepared and brought with them; and now they opened their treasures, and offered costly gifts to him, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, such as they would have presented, had they found the child in Herod's own palace in Jerusalem. Then, taking their leave, they were about to return to Herod, when a warning dream, which they could not mistake or misinterpret, directed them to depart into their country another way.

The hour was at hand when the costly gifts of the wise men would be necessary for the preservation of the poor little family, not yet settled and at

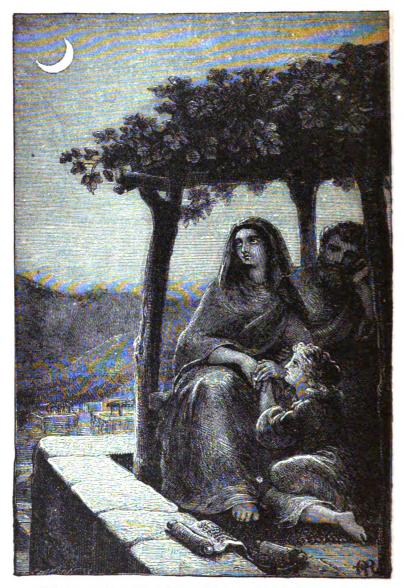
home in its new quarters. Even as a babe the Son of man had not where to lay his head; and no spot on earth was a resting-place for him. After the wise men were gone, the angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

Mary's chilly fears then were being realized, and she felt the first prick of the sword that should pierce her soul. The visit of the wise men from the far East had been another hour of exultation and another testimony to the claims of her Son. Possibly they may have told her that the king himself wished to come down from Jerusalem, and worship him; and dreams of splendor, of kingly and priestly protection for the infant Messiah might well fill her mind. But now she learned that Herod was seeking the child's life, to destroy him. They could not escape too quickly; there was no time to be lost. The angel's words were urgent, "Arise, at once."

It was night; a winter's night, but there must be no delay. At day-break the villagers would be astir, and they could not get away unseen. Before the gray streak of light was dawning in the east, they ought to be some miles on the road. Mary must carry the child, shielding him as best she could from the chilly dampness of the night; and Joseph must load himself with the wise men's gifts. Little had she thought, when those rich foreigners were falling down before her child in homage, that only a night or two later she would be stealing with him through the dark and silent streets, as if she was a criminal, not the happy mother of the glorious Messiah. And they were to flee out of the Holy Land itself, into Egypt, the old land of bondage!

Unseen, unnoticed, the flight from Bethlehem was made. They were but strangers there; and very few, if any, of the inhabitants would miss the strangers from Nazareth, who had settled among them so lately, and who had now gone away again with as little observation as they came.

Herod very soon came to the conclusion that the wise men, for some reason or other unknown to him, did not intend to obey his orders. They could very well have made the journey to Bethlehem in a day, and when he found that they did not return to him, he was exceeding wroth; for kings do not often meet with those who disregard their invitations. He quickly made up his mind what to do. If the wise men had brought him word where the child was, he would have been content to slay only him; now he must destroy all the infants under two years of age, to make sure of crushing



"He came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."—LUKE II. 51. 882

that life which threatened his crown. There was ample margin in the two years for any mistake on his own part, or that of the wise men. The childmust perish if he put to death all the little ones of the unhappy village.

We wonder if the news reached Mary in her place of refuge and safety Whilst she went about the streets of Bethlehem she must have seen many of those little children in their mothers' arms; their laughter and their cries had rung in her ears; and with her newly-opened mother's eyes she had compared them with her own blessed child, and loved them dearly for his sake. Now she would know the dire meaning of these words, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." A mystery of grief began to mingle itself with the mystery of her Son's life. In her heart, which was forever pondering over the strange events that had already befallen him and herself, there must always have been a very sad memory of the children who had perished on his account: and it may be that one of the first stories her lips uttered to the little Son at her knee was the story of their winter's flight into Egypt, and the slaying of all the children under two years of age who lived in Bethlehem, the place where he was born.

## CHAPTER V.

### Nazareth.

EROD died a shocking death, after terrible suffering both of mind and body. Once even, in his extreme misery, he attempted to put an end to himself, but was prevented by his attendants. A few days only before he died he put to death his son Antipater, and appointed his son Archelaus to succeed him as king in Judæa; but he separated Galilee from the kingdom, and left it to another son, Herod Antipas. He was in his seventieth year when he died, after reigning thirty-seven years; one of the most wicked and most wretched of kings.

It was now safe for Joseph and Mary to bring the child back to their native land. They seem to have had the idea of settling in Judæa again, instead of taking Jesus to the despised province of Galilee; but when they reached Judæa they heard that Archelaus reigned in the room of his father, Herod, and that during the passover week he had ordered his guards to

march into the temple amid the throng of worshippers, where they had massacred three thousand of the Jews. Such news naturally filled them with terror, and they might have sought safety again in Egypt; but Joseph was warned in a dream to go on into the land of Galilee. He was left to choose the exact place where he would settle down, and he returned to Nazareth, his and Mary's early home, where their kinsfolk lived. There was every reason why they should go back to Nazareth, since Jesus could not be brought up in his own city, the mournful little village of Bethlehem, where no child of his own age was now alive.

Here, in Nazareth, they were at home again; and long years of the most quiet blessedness lay before the mother of Jesus, though the trifling daily cares of life may have fretted it a little from too perfect a bliss for this world. The little child who played about her feet, who prattled beside her as she went down to the fountain for water, who listened with uplifted eyes to every word she spoke, never gave her a moment's pain, or made her heart ache by one careless or unkind word. Never once had the mother's voice to change its tone of tenderness into one of anger. Never had a frown to come across her loving and peaceful face when it was turned towards him. As he grew in wisdom and favor with God and man, she could rest upon that wisdom and grace, never to be disappointed, never to be thrown back upon herself. The most blessed years ever lived by woman were those of Mary, in the humble home in Nazareth.

It lay in the heart of the mountains, at the end of a little valley hardly a mile long, and not more than half a mile broad, with the barren slopes of hills shutting it in on every side. The valley was as green and fertile as a garden; and the village clung to the side of one of the mountains, half nestling at its foot. From the brow of the hills rising behind the village a splendid landscape was to be seen, westward to the glistening waters of the Mediterranean, with Mount Carmel stretching into them; northward as far as the snowy peaks of Hermon; and southward over the great plain of Jezreel, rich in cornfields; all the country being dotted over with villages and towns. The landscape is there still, and the deep blue sky hanging over all, and the clear atmosphere through which distant objects seem near, and the sighing of the wind across the plains, and the hum of insects, and the songs of birds; all is as it was when Jesus Christ climbed the mountains, as he loved to do, and sat on the summit, with a heart and spirit in full harmony with the loveliness around him, and with no secret sadness of the conscience to make him feel that he was not worthy to be there.

It was no lonely life that Jesus led. We read again and again of his brethren and sisters; and though it is not generally thought that these could have been Mary's children,\* but the children of her sister, they were so associated with him that all his life long they acted as his own brethren and sisters. With them he would go to school, and learn to read and write, for all Jews were carefully educated in these two branches. The books he had to study we know and possess in the Old Testament. Very probably he would own one of them, though they would be so costly as to be almost beyond his means, or those of his supposed father. We should like to know that he had the Book of Psalms, those psalms which Mary knew so well and had sung to him so often; or the prophecy of Isaiah, in which his young, undimmed eyes, that had hardly looked upon sorrow yet, and had neversmarted with tears of penitence, would read and read again the warning words of the Messiah's sufferings, "a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." When he was alone yonder on the breezy summit of the mountain, did he ever sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd?" And did he never whisper to himself the awful words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Besides his cousins there were his neighbors all about him, quite commonplace people, who could not see how innocent and beautiful his life was. They were a passionate, rough race, notorious throughout the country, so that it had become almost a proverb, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Jesus dwelt among them as one of them; Joseph the carpenter's son. He could not yet heal the sick; but is there no help and comfort in tender compassion for those who suffer? The widow's son at Nain was not the first he had seen carried out for burial. The man born blind was not the only one groping about in darkness who felt his hand, and heard the pitying tones of his troubled voice. We may be sure that amongst his neighbors in Nazareth Jesus saw many a form of suffering, and his heart always echoed to a cry, if it were but the cry of an animal in pain.

In one other way Jesus shared the common lot of boys. He had to take to a trade which was not likely to have been his choice. Whether as the eldest son of a large family, or the only son of a woman left a widow, he had to learn the trade of his supposed father. The little workshop, where

<sup>\*</sup> I agree in this opinion, chiefly for the reason that when Jesus died he committed Mary to the care of his young disciple John, which would seem unnatural to any tender-hearted, good mother, who had at least four other sons and two daughters living. Our Lord would hardly throw so much discredit upon such relationships.

neighbors could always drop in with their trifling gossip, or at work in their own houses, where they could grumble and find fault; this must have been irksome to him. The long, monotonous hours, the insignificant labor, the ceaseless buzz of chattering about him; we can understand how weary and worn his spirit must have felt as well as his body. If he could have been a shepherd, like Moses, the great lawgiver, and David, his own kingly ancestor, how far more fitting that would have seemed! How his courage and tenderness toward his flock would have been a type of what he would be in after life! The solitude would have been sweet to him, and the changing aspects of the seasons from year to year. In after life he often compared himself to a shepherd, but never once is there any reference to his uncongenial calling in the hot workshop of Nazareth, where the only advantage was that it did not separate him from his mother.

Does a blameless life win favor among any people? There was one man in Galilee, one only in the wide world, who never needed to go up to Jerusalem to offer any sacrifice for sin. Neither sin-offering nor trespass-offering had this man to bring to the altar of God. The peace-offering he could eat in the courts of the temple as a type of happy communion with the unseen God, and of a complete surrender of himself to his will. But, let the people scan his conduct as closely as village neighbors can do, not one among them could say that Jesus, the son of Joseph, had need to carry up to Jerusalem an offering for any trespass. Did they love him the better for this? Did he find honor among them? Nay, not even in his father's house.

# CHAPTER VI.

## The First Passover

THERE is one incident, and only one, given to us of the early life of our Lord.

It was the custom of his parents to go up to Jerusalem once a year, to the feast of the passover. For the Jews living in Galilee it was a long journey; but the feast came at the finest time of the year for travelling, after the rains of winter, and before the dry heat of summer. It was a great yearly pilgrimage, in which troops from every village and town on the road came to swell the numbers as the pilgrims marched southward. Past the cornfields, where the grain was already forming in the ear; under the mountain slopes, clothed with silvery olive trees and the young green of the vines:

across the babbling brooks, not yet dried by heat; through groves of sycamores and oak trees fresh in leaf, the long procession passed from town to town; sleeping safely in the open air by night, and journeying by pleasant stages in the day, until they reached Judæa; and, weary with the dusty road from Jericho to Jerusalem, shouted with joy when they turned a curve of the Mount of Olives, and saw the Holy City lying before them.

Jesus was twelve years old when, probably, he first made this long yet joyous march up to Jerusalem. We can fancy the eager boy "going on before them," as he did many years later when he went up to his last passover; hastening forward for that first glorious view of Jerusalem, which met his eye from Olivet, the mount which was to be so closely associated with his There stood the Holy City, with its marble palaces crowning the heights of Zion; and the still more magnificent temple on its own mount, bathed in the brilliant light of the spring sunshine. The white, wondrous beauty of his Father's house, with the trembling columns of smoke ever rising from its altars through the clear air to the blue heavens above, rose opposite to We know the hymn that his tremulous, joyous lips would sing, and that would be echoed by the procession following him as they too caught sight of the house of God, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God!" Thousands upon thousands of pilgrims had chanted that psalm before him; but never one like that boy of twelve, when his father's house was first seen by his happy eyes.

Perhaps there was no hour of perfect happiness like that to Jesus again. Joseph was still alive, caring for him and protecting him. His mother, who could not but recall the strange events that had accompanied his birth, kept him at her side as they entered the temple, pointing out to him the splendor and the sacred symbols of the place. The silvery music of the temple service; the thunder of the amens of the vast congregations; the faint scent of incense wafted towards him; all fell upon the vivid, delicate senses of youth. And below these visible signs there was breaking upon him their deep, invisible, spiritual meaning; though not yet darkened with the shadow of that awful burden to be laid upon himself, when he, as the Lamb of God, was to take away the sins of the world. This was the time, perhaps, when "he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows" more than at any other season of his life.

The temple had been rebuilt by Herod in the vain hope of winning popu-

larity among his people. The outer walls formed a square of a thousand feet, with double or treble rows of aisles between ranks of marble pillars. These colonnades surrounded the first court, that of the Gentiles, into which foreigners might enter, though they were forbidden to go further upon pain of death. A flight of fifteen steps led from this court into that of the women, a large space where the whole congregation of worshippers assembled, but beyond which women were not allowed to go, unless they had a sacrifice to offer. The next court had a small space railed off, called the Court of Israel; but the whole bore the name of the Court of the Priests. in which stood a great altar of unhewn stones forty-eight feet square, upon which three fires were kept burning continually, for the purpose of consuming the sacrifices. Beyond these courts stood the actual temple, containing the Holy Place, which was entered by none but a few priests, who were chosen by lot daily; and the Holiest of Holies, open only to the high-priest himself, and to him but once a year, on the great day of atonement.

It was here, in the temple, that Jesus loved to be during his sojourn in Jerusalem; but the feast was soon ended, and his parents started homewards with the returning band of pilgrims. Probably Jesus set off with them from the place where they had lodged; and they, supposing him to be with some of his young companions, with his cousins perhaps, went a day's journey from Jerusalem. But when the night fell, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, he was nowhere to be found. A terrible night would that be for both of them, but especially for Mary, whose fears for him had been slumbering during the quiet years at Nazareth. but were not dead. Was it possible that any one could have discovered their cherished secret, that this was the child whom the wise men had come so far to see, and for whom Herod had slain so many infants in Bethlehem? They turned back to Jerusalem seeking him in sorrow. It was the third day before they found him. Where he lived those three days we do not know. Why not "where the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself?" It was in the temple that Joseph and Mary found him; in one of the public rooms or halls opening out of the court of the Gentiles, where the rabbis and those learned in the law were wont to assemble for teaching or argument. Jesus was in the midst of them asking questions, and answering those put to him by the astonished rabbis, who had not expected much understanding from this boy from Galilee. His parents themselves were amazed when they saw him there; and Mary,

who seems to have had no difficulty in approaching him, spoke to him chidingly.

"Son," she said, "why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

The question fell upon him as the first dimness upon the glory and gladness of his sojourn in the temple. The poor home at Nazareth, his father Joseph, the carpenter's shop, the daily work, pressed back upon him in the place of the temple music, the prayer, the daily sacrifice. There they stood, his supposed father, weary with the long search, and his mother looking at him with sorrowful, reproaching eyes. He was ready to go back with them, but he could not go without a pang.

"How is it that ye sought me?" he asked, sadly; "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

But he had not come to this earth to dwell in his Father's house; and he must leave it now, only to revisit it from time to time. "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

Eighteen more years, years of monotonous labor, did Jesus live in Nazareth. Changes came to his home as well as to others. Joseph died, and left his mother altogether dependent upon him. Galilee was still governed by Herod Antipas; but in Judæa the King Archelaus had been dethroned, and the country was made a province of Rome, under Roman governors. This had happened whilst Jesus was a boy, and a rebellion had been attempted under a leader called Judas of Galilee, which had caused great excitement. Though it had been put down by the Romans, there still remained a party, secretly popular, who used every effort to free their country from the Roman yoke. So strong had grown the longing for the Messiah, that a number of the people were ready to embrace the cause of any leader, who would claim that title, and lead them against their enemies and masters.

There was a numerous class of his fellow-countrymen to whom Jesus must have been naturally drawn during his youth, and to whom he may have attached himself for a time. This was the sect of the Pharisees, noble and patriotic as our Puritans were, in the beginning; and at all times living a frugal and devout life, in fair contrast with the Sadducees, who were wealthy, luxurious, and indifferent. The Pharisees were mostly of the middle classes; and their ceaseless devotion to religion gave them great authority among the common people. To the child Jesus they must have

appeared nearer to God than any other class. There were among them two parties: one following a rabbi of the name of Hillel, who was a gentle, cautious, tolerant man, averse to making enemies, and of a most merciful and forgiving disposition. Some say that he began to teach only thirty years before the birth of Christ; and it is certainly amongst his disciples that Jesus found some friends and followers. The second party was that of Shammai, who differed from the other in numberless ways. They were well known for their fierceness and jealousy, for stirring up the people against any one they hated, and for shrinking from no bloodshed in furthering their religious views. They were scrupulous about the fulfilment of the most trivial laws which had come down to them through tradition. These had grown so numerous through the lapse of centuries, that it was scarcely possible to live for an hour without breaking some commandment.

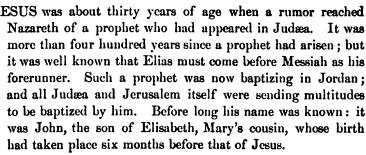
Yet among the Pharisees there were many right-minded and noble men, to whom Jesus must have been attracted. "The only true Pharisee," said the Talmud, that collection of traditions which they held to be of equal authority with the Scriptures—"the only true Pharisee is he who does the will of his Father which is in heaven because he loves him." Such Pharisees, when he met with them, as he did meet with them, won his love and approbation. It was the "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," whom he hated.



# BOOK II. THE PROPHET.

### CHAPTER 1.

John the Baptist.



We have no reason to suppose that any person living at this time, except Mary, knew Jesus to be the Son of God. Those who had known it were Joseph, Zacharias, and Elisabeth; and all these were dead. John, to whom we might suppose his parents would tell the mysterious secret, says expressly that he did not know him to be the Messiah until it was revealed to him from heaven. He was familiar with his cousin Jesus, and felt himself, with all his stern, rigid life in the wilderness, to be unworthy to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his sandals; although he was a priest, who was known throughout the land as a prophet, and Jesus was merely a village carpenter, whose life had been a common life of toil amidst his comrades. Mary alone knew her son to be the promised Messiah; and though the long years may somewhat have dulled her hopes, they flamed up again suddenly when the news came that John the forerunner had begun to preach "The kingdom of God is at hand," and that multitudes, even of the Pharisees, were flocking to his baptism, so to enlist themselves as subjects of the new kingdom.

But this news did not make any change in our Lord. There was not less

tenderness and pity in his heart when he lived among his neighbors in Nazareth than when he healed the sick who came to him from every quarter. Neither was there any more ambition in his spirit when he passed from town to town, amid a throng of followers, than when he climbed up into the loneliness of the mountains about his village home. How could be touched by any earthly ambition, who knew himself to be not only a Son of God, but the only-begotten Son of the Father? He had been waiting through these quiet, homely years for the call to come, and now he was ready to quit all, with the words in his heart, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God!"

It may well be that Mary went with him a little way on his road towards Jordan, on that wintry morning, when he quitted his workshop, and the familiar streets of Nazareth, to dwell in them no more. There was no surprise to her in what had come to pass; but there must have been a thrill of exultation mingled with fear. He had been her son all these years, but now he was to belong, not to her, but to the nation. What sorrow and triumph must have been in her heart when at last he bade her farewell, and she watched him as long as he was in sight, clad in the robe she had woven for him without seam, like the robe of a priest. Was he not a priest and a king already to her?

It was winter, and though not cold in the valley of the Jordan, the heavy and continuous rains must have dispersed the multitudes that had gone out to John, leaving him almost in solitude once more. There could have been no crowd of spectators when Jesus was baptized. Yet even in January there are mild and sunny days when he and John might have gone down into the river for the significant rite which was to mark the beginning of his new career. But John would not at first consent to baptize his cousin Jesus, declaring that it would be more fit for himself to be baptized by one whose life had been holier and happier than his own. The rich and powerful and pious Pharisees John had sent away with rebukes, yet when Jesus came from Galilee, he forbade him.

But Jesus would not take his refusal. For some months John had been waiting for a sign promised to him from heaven, which should point out to him the true Messiah; and the people of the land looked to him to show them the Christ, whose kingdom he was proclaiming. Now, after he had baptized his cousin in the waters of the Jordan, already troubled with the rains from the mountains, and they were coming up again out of the river, he saw the pale wintry sky above them opening, and the Spirit of God de-

scending, visible to his eyes in the form of a dove, which lighted upon Jesus, whilst a voice came from heaven, speaking to him, and saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What passed between them further, the Messiah and his forerunner, we are not told. Jesus did not stay with John the Baptist, for immediately he left him and the place where he had been baptized, and went away into the wilderness, far from the busy haunts of ordinary men, such as he had dwelt among until now. commonplace, everyday life was ended, and had fallen from him forever. A dense cloud of mystery, which no one has been able to pierce through, surrounds the forty days in which he was alone in the wilderness, suffering the first pangs of the grief with which he was bruised and smitten for our iniquities, being fiercely assailed of the devil, that he might himself suffer being tempted, and so able to succor all those who are tempted. The compassion and fellow-feeling he had before had for sufferers he was henceforth to feel for sinners. There was to be no gulf between him and the sinners he was about to call to repentance; he was to be their friend, their companion, and it was his part to know the stress and strain of temptation which had overcome them. Sinners were to feel, when they drew near to him, that he knew all about them and their sins, and needed not that any man should tell him. He had been in all points tempted as they had been.

## CHAPTER II.

# Cana of Galilee.

WHEN Jesus returned to Jordan the short winter of Palestine was over, and already an eager crowd had gathered again about John. On the day of his return a deputation from the Pharisees had come from Jerusalem to question John as to his authority for thus baptizing the people. They were the religious rulers of the nation, and felt themselves bound to inquire into any new religious rite, and to ask for the credentials of any would-be prophet. These priests who had come to see John knew him to be a priest, and were, probably, inclined to take his part, if they could do so in safety. They asked him, eagerly, "Art thou Christ?" "Art thou Elias?" "Art thou that prophet?" And when he answered, "No," they ask again, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" The crowd was listening, and Jesus, standing amongst them, was also listening for his

reply. "I am a voice," he said, "the voice spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the ways of the Lord." The priests were disappointed with this answer, and asked, "Why baptizest thou then?" They had not given him authority to appear as a prophet, yet here he was drawing great multitudes about him, and publicly reproving the most religious sect of the nation, calling them a generation of vipers, and bidding them bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. From that time they began to throw discredit upon the preaching of John the Baptist, and spoke despitefully against him, saying, "He hath a devil." Nothing is easier than to fling a bad name at those who are not of our own way of thinking.

Two days after this, John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to two of his disciples as the Messiah whose coming he had foretold. These two, Andrew and a young man named John, immediately followed Jesus, and being invited by him to the place where he was staying, they remained the rest of the day with him; probably took their first meal with him, their hearts burning within them as he opened the Scriptures to their understanding. The next morning Andrew met with his brother Simon, and said, "We have found the Messiah," and brought him to Jesus. The day following, Jesus was about to start home again to Galilee, and seeing Philip, who already knew him, he said to him, "Follow me!" Simon and Andrew. who were Philip's townsmen, were at that time with Jesus; Philip was ready to obey, but he first found Nathanael, and said to him, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, is he of whom Moses and the prophets did write!" "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" cried Nathanael, doubtingly; but he went to Jesus and was so satisfied by the few words he spoke to him, that he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!"

With these five followers Jesus turned his steps homewards, after an absence of nearly two months. All of them lived in Galilee; and Simon Peter and Andrew, who had a house in Capernaum, at the head of the lake of Galilee, appear to have turned off and left the little company at the point where their nearest way home crossed the route taken by the others. Jesus went on with the other three: Philip, whom he had distinctly called to follow him; Nathanael, whose home in Cana of Galilee lay directly north of Nazareth; and John, who was hardly more than a youth, and as yet free from the ties and duties of manhood. A pleasant march must that have been along the valleys lying south of Mount Tabor, with the spring

sun shining overhead, and all the green sward bedecked with flowers, and the birds singing in the cool, fragrant air of morning and evening.

But they did not find Mary at Nazareth. She was gone with the cousins of Jesus to a marriage at Cana in Galilee, the town of Nathanael, where he had a home, to which he gladly urged his new-found rabbi to go. He could not have foreseen this pleasure; but now, as they went on northward to Cana, the Messiah was his guest, and, with Philip and John, was to enter into his house. But no sooner was it known that they were come into the village than Jesus was called with his friends, one of whom was an old neighbor of the bridegroom, to join the marriage feast.

There was very much that Mary longed to hear from her son after this long absence; but the circumstances could not have been favorable for it. In his beloved face, worn and pale with his forty days of temptation and fasting in the wilderness, her eyes saw a change which told plainly that his new life had begun in suffering. He looked as if he had passed through a trial which set him apart. Perhaps he found time to tell her of his hunger in the desert, and the temptation which came to him to use his miraculous powers in order to turn stones into bread for himself. It seems that, in some way or other, she knew that, like Elijah and Elisha, the great prophets of olden times, he could and would work miracles as a sign to the people that he came from God; and she felt all a mother's eagerness that he should at once manifest his glory.

So when there was no more wine she turned to him, hoping for some open proof to the friends about her that he possessed this wonder-working power. Besides, she had been accustomed to turn to him in every trouble, in any trifling, household difficulty; casting all her cares upon him, because she knew he cared for her. So she said to him quietly, yet significantly, "They have no wine." Some of Elisha's miracles had been even more homely; he had made the poisoned pottage fit for food, and had fed a company of people with but a scanty supply of barley-cakes. Why should not Jesus gladden the feast and save his friends from shame, by making the wine last out to the end?

A few days before our Lord had been in the desert, amid the wild beasts, with the devil tempting him. Now he, who was to be in all things one with us, was sitting at a marriage feast among his friends; his mother and kinsfolk there, with his new followers; every face about him glad and happy. It was not the first marriage he had been at, for his sisters, no doubt, were married, and living at Nazareth; and he knew what the mor-







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tification would be if the social mirth came too suddenly to an end. He cared for these little pleasures and little innocent enjoyments, and would not have them spoiled. The miracle he refused to work to satisfy his own severe hunger he wrought for the innocent pleasure of the friends who were rejoicing around him. There were six water-pots of stone standing by for the use of the guests in washing their hands before sitting down to the table, and he bade the servants first to fill them up again with water to the brim, and then to draw out, and bear to the ruler of the feast. Upon tasting it he cried out to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

So Christ changes water into wine, tears into gladness, the waves and floods of sorrow into a crystal sea, whereon the harpers stand, having the harps of God. But he can work this miracle only for his friends; none but those who loved him drank of that wine. It was no grand miracle of giving sight to eyes born blind, or raising to life a widow's son. Yet there is a special fitness in it. He had long known what poverty, and straitness, and household cares were, and he must show that these common troubles were not beneath his notice; no, nor the little secret pangs of anxiety and disappointment which we so often hide from those about us. We are not all called to bear extraordinary sorrows, but most of us know what trifling cares are; and it was one of these small household difficulties the Son of man met by his first miracle.

After this, Jesus, with his mother, and brethren, and disciples, went down to Capernaum for a few days, until it was time to go on their yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover, which was near at hand. Peter and Andrew were living there, and might join them in their journey to Judæa; though they do not seem to have stayed with our Lord, but probably returned after the passover to their own home until he considered it a fit time to call them to leave all and follow him.

### CHAPTER III.

## The First Summer.

FOR the first time Jesus went up to Jerusalem with his little band of followers, who knew him to be the Messiah; and his cousins, who did not yet believe in him, but were apparently willing to do so if he would act as they expected the Messiah to act. If he would repeat his miracle on a

large scale, and so convince the mass of the people, they were ready enough to proclaim him as the Messiah.

Would not John the Baptist be there too? He as a priest, and as a prophet, would no doubt be looked for, as Jesus afterwards was, at the feast of the passover. He must have had a strong impetuous yearning to see him who had been pointed out to him as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world. Maybe he ate the paschal supper with Jesus and his disciples. We fancy we see him, the well-known hermit-prophet from the wilderness, in his robe of camel's hair, with its leathern girdle, and his long, shaggy hair, and weatherbeaten face, following closely the steps of Jesus, through the streets, and about the courts of the temple, listening to his words with thirsty ears, and calling himself "the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoicing greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." It was the last passover John the Baptist would ever relebrate; though that he could not know.

Upon going up into the temple, Jesus found the court of the Gentiles thronged with sheep, and oxen, and doves, animals needed for the sacrifices, but disturbing the congregation, which assembled in the court of the women. by their incessant lowing and cooing. Money-changers were sitting there also; for Roman coins were now in common use instead of the Jewish money, which alone was lawful for payment in the temple. No doubt there was a good deal of loud and angry debate round the tables of the money-changers; and a disgraceful confusion and disorder prevailed. Jesus took up a scourge of small cords, and drove out of the temple the noisy oxen and sheep, bidding the sellers of the doves to carry them away. The tables of the money-changers he overturned; and no one opposed him, but conscious of the scandal they had brought upon the temple, they retreated "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," he before him. said. To him it was always his "Father's house;" and before he could manifest forth his glory, his Father must first be glorified. The disciples, looking upon his face, remembered that it had been written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

But the priests and Levites of the temple, to whom this traffic brought much profit, were not so easily conscience-pricked as the merchants had been. They could not defend the wrong practices, but they came together to question the authority of this young stranger from Galilee. If John the Baptist had done it, probably they would not have ventured to speak, for all the people counted him a prophet. But this was a new man from Galilee!

The Jews held the Galileans in scorn, as only little better than the Samaritans. "What sign shewest thou," they ask, "seeing that thou doest such things?" The things were signs themselves; the mighty, prevailing anger of the Lord, and the smitten consciences of the merchants, if they had not been too blind to see them. Jesus gave them a mysterious answer, which none could understand. "Destroy this temple," he said, "and in three days I will raise it up." What! were they to pull down all they most prided in, and trusted in: their temple, which had been forty and six years in building! They left him, but they treasured up his words in their memories. The disciples also remembered them, and believed them when the mysterious sign was fulfilled.

But Jesus did not seek to convince the people without signs, and signs which they could understand. He worked certain miracles in Jerusalem during the week of the feast, which won a degree of faith from many. But their faith was not strong and true enough for him to trust to it, and he held himself aloof from them. What they looked for was an earthly king, who should plot and conspire for the throne; and the Roman soldiers, who garrisoned the strong fortress which overlooked the temple, would not have borne the rumor of such a king. There was at all times great danger of these expectations reaching the ears of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who was not a man to shrink from needless bloodshed. For the sake of the people themselves Jesus did not commit himself unto them.

Amongst those who heard of the miracles he had wrought was one of the Pharisees, a member of the great religious committee among them called the Sanhedrim. His name was Nicodemus, and he came to our Lord by night, to inquire more particularly what he was teaching. Jesus told him more distinctly than he had yet done what his new message to the Jews and to the whole world was: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Nicodemus went away strongly impressed with the new doctrine, though not prepared to give up all for its sake, and not yet called upon to do so. But from that time Jesus had a firm friend in the very midst of the Pharisees, who used his powerful influence to protect him; and the feast passed by without any further jealous interference from the priests.

But it was not quite safe or suitable to remain in Jerusalem; and after the greater number of their friends and kinsmen had returned home, Jesus, with two or three of his disciples, sought the banks of the Jordan, whither John the Baptist had already returned. The harvest was beginning, for it was near the end of April, and bands of harvesters passed to and fro from uplands to lowlands until all the corn was gathered in by the end of June. Down in the valley of the Jordan the summer is very hot; and the wants of life are few. They could sleep in the open air, or in some hut of branches rudely woven together; and their food, like John the Baptist's, cost little or nothing. There was to be no settled home henceforth for any one of them. The disciples had left all to follow the Son of man, and he had not where to lay his head.

Crowds of eager and curious followers came to Jesus, as the year before they had flocked to John the Baptist, who had now moved some miles farther up the river, and was still preaching "The kingdom of God is at hand." But John did no miracle, and the crowds that followed Jesus were greater than those who followed him. In the eyes of the Pharisees it must have seemed that the two prophets were in rivalry; and many a jest and a sneer would be heard in the temple courts and in the streets of Jerusalem as they talked of those "two fanatics" on the banks of the Jordan. Even John the Baptist's disciples fancied that a wrong was done their rabbi by this new teacher, who had been with him for a while, and so learned his manner of arousing and teaching the people. They went to John, and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him."

Now was John's opportunity to manifest a wonderful humility and devotion. "I am of the earth, earthy, and speak of the earth," he said; "he that cometh from heaven is above all. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. I am but the friend of the bridegroom; I stand and hear him, and rejoice greatly because of his voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled."

Did he hear that voice often, and rejoice in it? There were not many miles separating them, and both of them were hardy and used to long marches. It may well be that during those summer months they met often on the banks of the river—the happiest season of John's life. For he had been a lonely, unloved man, living a wild life in the wilderness, strange to social and homelike ways; his father and mother long since dead, with neither brother nor sister, he would find in Jesus all the missing relationships, and pour out to him the richest treasures of a heart that no loving trust had opened until now.

So the summer passed away, and the autumn with its vintage; then the

rainy months drew near. Bands of harvestmen and bands of pilgrims had gone by, tarrying for a few hours to learn truths they had never heard before, even in the temple. Many of them were baptized by the disciples, though Jesus baptized not. The new prophet had become more popular than the old prophet, and John's words were fulfilled, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

### CHAPTER IV.

#### Samaria.

THERE were several reasons why our Lord should leave the banks of the Jordan, besides that of the rainy season coming on. The Pharisces were beginning to take more special notice of him, having heard that he had made more disciples even than John, whom they barely tolerated. Moreover, this friend and forerunner of his had been seized by Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, and cast into a dreary prison on the east of the Dead sea. This violent measure was likely to excite a disturbance among the people; and Jesus, whose aim was in no way to come into collision with the government, could not prudently remain in a neighborhood too near the fortress where John was imprisoned. He therefore withdrew from the Jordan, in the month of December or January, having been in Judæa since the feast of the passover in the spring.

One way to his old home, the place where his relatives were still living, lay through Samaria, a country he had probably never crossed, as the inhabitants were uncivil and churlish towards all Jewish travellers, especially if their faces were towards Jerusalem. But Jesus was journeying to Galilee, and did not expect them to be actively hostile to him and his little band of companions. It was an interesting road, and led him through Shechem, one of the oldest cities in the world, lying between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, in a vale so narrow at the eastern end, that when the priests stood on these mountains to pronounce the blessings and the curses in the cars of all the children of Israel, there was no difficulty for the people standing in the valley to hear distinctly. Two miles away was a very deep well, the waters of which were cool in the hottest summer; a well dug by the patriarch Jacob upon the same parcel of a field where he built his first altar to the God of Israel. Here too were buried the bones of Joseph, which had been carried for forty years through the wilderness to the land his father

Jacob had given to him and to his children specially. Shiloh also lay along the route; and Jesus, who possessed every innocent and refined taste, must have enjoyed passing through these ancient places, so intimately connected with the early history of his nation.

Sheehem lay about eighteen or twenty miles distant from the fords of Jordan, near which we suppose Jesus to have been dwelling. By the time he and his disciples reached Jacob's well, after this long morning's march, it was noonday, and he was wearied, more wearied than the rest, who appear always to have been stronger than he was. They left him sitting by the side of the well, whilst they went on into the city to buy food for their mid-day meal. Their Master was thirsty, but the well was deep, and they had nothing to draw up the water. They hastened on, therefore, eager to return with food for him whom they loved to minister to.

Not long after a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and was much astonished when this Jew asked her to give him some to drink. She was probably less churlish than a man would have been, though she was barely civil. But as Jesus spoke with her she made the discovery that he was a prophet; and immediately referred to him the most vexing question which separated the Jews from the Samaritans. The latter had a temple upon Mount Gerizim, which had been rebuilt by Herod, as the temple at Jerusalem had been; and she asked which is the place where men ought to worship? Here, or at Jerusalem? She could only expect one answer from a Jew; an answer to excuse her anger, and send her away from the well without satisfying his thirst. But Jesus had now forgotten both thirst and He knew that many a sorrowful heart had prayed to God as truly from Mount Gerizim as from the temple at Jerusalem. There is no special place, he answered, for in every place men may worship the Father: the true worshippers worship him in spirit and in truth, for God is a Spirit. This was no such answer as the woman looked for; and her next words were spoken in a different temper. "We are looking for the Messiah, as well as the Jews," she said, "and when he is come, he will tell us all things that we do not yet know." Jesus had already told her the circumstances of her own life, and she was looking at him wistfully, with this thought of the Messiah in her mind, when he said to her more plainly, more distinctly, perhaps, than he had ever done before to any one, "I that speak to thee am he."

By this time the disciples had come back, and were much astonished to find him talking to the woman. If they heard these last words they would

marvel still more, for Jesus generally left men to discover his claims to the Messiahship. The wrong impression prevailing among the Jews concerning the Messiah was not shared by the Samaritans. The latter kept closely to the plain and simple law of Moses, without receiving the traditions which the Pharisces held of equal importance with the law, and were thus more ready to understand the claims and work of Christ. The woman therefore hurried back to the city, leaving her water-pot, and called together the men of the place to come out and see if this man were not the Christ. They be sought him to stay with them in their ancient city under the Mount of Blessing; and, no doubt very much to the amazement of his disciples, he consented, and abode there two days, spending the time in teaching them his doctrine, the very inner meaning of which he had already laid open to the woman. "God is a Spirit; he is the Father, whom every true worshipper may worship in the recesses of his own spirit." Many of them believed, and said to the woman, "We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Wonderful words, which filled the heart of Christ with rejoicing. Not his own nation, not his own disciples, not even his own kinsmen, had learned so much of his mission as these Samaritans; ever afterwards he spoke of them with tenderness, and when he would take a type of himself in the parable of the man fallen among thieves, he chose not a Jew, but a despised Samaritan.

From Sychar Jesus passed through one of the long deep valleys which lead to the plain of Esdraelon, where he was once more in Galilee. It was winter, and the snow was glistening on the lower mountains, as well as upon the distant range of Lebanon. The heavy rains had swollen the brooks into floods; and all the great plain before him, which in four months' time would be ripe for harvest, a sea of golden grain, scarcely rippled by a gust of wind, was now lying in wintry brownness and desolation, and swept by the storms of hail and rain. He seems to have passed by Nazareth, staying, if he stayed at all, for a few hours only, and to have gone on with Nathanael to his home in Cana, where Jesus had many friends, especially the bridegroom whose marriage-feast in the spring he had made glad with no common gladness.

He had not been long in Cana before the streets of the little village witnessed the arrival of a great nobleman from Capernaum, who had heard of the fame of Jesus in Judæa, and the miracles he had wrought there. Until now, with the exception of Nicodemus, it would seem that none but people of his own class had sought him, or brought their sick to be healed by him.

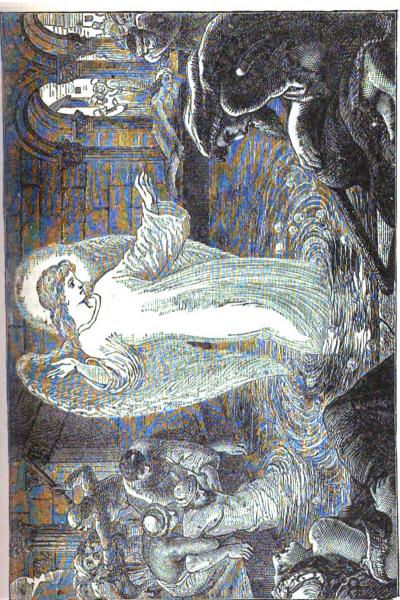
But this nobleman had a son, whose life all the skill of the Jewish physicians could not save; and his last hope lay with Jesus. His faith could not grasp more than the idea that if Jesus came, like any other physician, to see and touch the child, he would have the power to heal him. "Sir, come down," he cried, "before my son is dead." "Go thy way," Jesus answered; "thy son liveth." What was there in his voice and glance which filled the father's heart with perfect trust and peace? The nobleman did not hurry away, though there was time for him to reach home before nightfall. But the next day, as he was going down to Capernaum, he met his servants, who had been sent after him with the good news that the fever had left his son yesterday at the seventh hour; that same hour when Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth."

Now he had a friend and disciple amongst the wealthiest and highest classes in Capernaum, as he had one amongst the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. Both protected him as much as it lay in their power; and it is supposed by many that the mother of the child thus healed was the same as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, who, with other women, attended our Lord during the last year of his life, and ministered to him of their sub-Thus, on every hand, Jesus was making friends and enemies. year had scarcely passed since he quitted his humble home in Nazareth; but his name was already known throughout Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria; and everywhere people were ranging themselves into two parties, for and against Amongst the common people he had few enemies; amongst the wealthy and religious classes he had few friends. He felt the peculiar difficulty these latter classes had in following him; and expressed it in two sayings, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," and "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

# CHAPTER V.

## The First Sabbath Miracle.

A FTER staying a short time in Cana, Jesus went once more to Jerusalem, about the middle of March, a month or so before the passever. At this time there was a feast of the Jews, not a religious, but rather a national feast, in celebration of the deliverance of their race in the days of Esther. It drew together many of the poorer and lower classes, among



"An angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water," -JOHN V. 4.

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whom our Lord's work specially lay, and so offered to him, perhaps, unusual opportunities for mingling with the common people living near Jerusalem. For we do not suppose that the Galileans went up to this feast; only the country-folks dwelling in Judæa, within a few miles of their chief city, who could make a holiday at that time of the year. Either upon the feast-day itself, or the Sabbath day nearest to it, Jesus walked down to the sheepgate of the city, near which was a pool, possessing the singular property, so it was believed, of healing the first person who could get into it after there had been seen a certain troubling of the water. A great crowd of impotent folk, of halt, blind and withered, lay about waiting for this movement of the surface of the pool. There was no spot in Jerusalem where we could sooner expect to find our Lord, with his wondrous power of healing all manner of diseases. Not even his Father's house was more likely to be trodden by his feet than this Bethesda, or house of mercy. Probably there was a greater throng than usual, because of the feast, which would offer an opportunity to many to come out of the country. Jesus passed by until he singled out one man, apparently because he knew he had now been crippled for thirty-eight years, and had been so friendless that during all that time he had no man to help him to get down first to the water. The cripple was hopeless, but still lingered there, as if to watch others win the blessing which he could never reach.

Upon this miserable man Jesus looked down with his pitying eyes, and said, as though speaking to one who would not hesitate to obey him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

It seems as though Jesus passed on, and was lost in the crowd; but the cripple felt a strange strength throbbing through his withered limbs. He was made whole, and he took up his bed, to return home, if he had any home, or at least to escape from that suffering multitude. Then did the Pharisees behold the terrible spectacle of a man carrying his bed through the streets of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day! They cried to him hastily, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed on the Sabbath day." He answered them by telling the story of his miraculous cure, though he did not know who the stranger was, for Jesus was gone away. No doubt he put his burden down at the bidding of the Pharisees, but he did not lose the new strength that had given him power to take it up.

The same day Jesus found him in the temple, whither he had gone in his gladness. Once more those pitying, searching eyes were fixed upon him, and the voice that had spoken to him in the morning sounded again in his

ears. "Behold," said Jesus, "thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." The man departed and told the Pharisees who it was that had made him whole, thinking, no doubt, to bring praise and glory to his deliverer.

Possibly until now the presence of Jesus at this feast had not been known to the Pharisees. The last time he was in Jerusalem he had solemnly and emphatically claimed the temple as his Father's house, and had indirectly reproved them by assuming the authority to rid it of the scandals they had allowed to creep into it. Now they found him deliberately setting aside one of their most binding rules for keeping the Sabbath. John the Baptist, though both priest and prophet, had never ventured so far. Their religion of rites and ceremonies, of traditions, of shows and shams, was in danger. With their religion, they firmly believed their place and nation would go, and Jerusalem and Judæa would become like the heathen cities and countries about them. It was time to put a stop to it. John the Baptist was in prison. What if Jesus of Nazareth could be slain quietly, so as not to disturb the common people, who heard him gladly?

Jesus then, forewarned, it may be, by a friend, found himself compelled to quit Jerusalem hastily, instead of sojourning there till the coming passover. He was now too well known in the streets of the city to escape notice. More than this, if he stayed until the Galileans came up to the feast, there would be constant danger of his followers coming into collision with the Pharisees. Riots in Jerusalem at the time of the feasts were not uncommon, and often ended in bloodshed. Not long before, Pilate had slain eighteen Galileans in some tumult in the temple courts; and there was every probability that some such calamity might occur again should any provocation arise.

Jesus, therefore, retreated from Jerusalem with a few friends who were with him. He had not yet chosen his band of twelve apostles, but John, the youngest and dearest of them all, was with him, for it is he alone who has given us this record of the first year of our Lord's ministry. Philip, also, we suppose to have been his disciple from the first, in obedience to the call, "Follow me;" for Jesus seems to have been particularly grieved with his dulness of mind, when he says to him, "Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and yet hast thou not known me?" Moreover, when Jesus was next at Jerusalem for the passover, those Greeks who wished to see him came and spoke to Philip as being best known as the attendant of our Lord. Whether there were other disciples with him, or who they were,

we do not know. It was a little company that had lived together through eleven months, most of which had been spent on the banks of the Jordan, in a peaceful and happy seclusion, save for the multitudes that came to be taught the new doctrine, or to be healed of their afflictions. Now they were to be persecuted, to have spies lurking about them, to be asked treacherous questions, to have perjured witnesses ready to swear anything against them, and to feel from day to day that their enemies were powerful and irreconcilable. With a sad foresight of what must be the end, our Lord left Jerusalem and returned into Galilee.

# CHAPTER VI.

### His Old Home.

JESUS came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. His aunt, Mary Cleophas, was still living there with her children, if his mother was not. The old familiar home was the same, and the steep, narrow streets of the village in which he had played and worked. Coming down to it from the unfriendly city of Jerusalem, it seemed like a little nest of safety, lying amongst its pleasant hills. Here, at least, so his disciples might think, they would find repose and friendship; and the soreness of heart that must have followed the knowledge that the Jews sought to slay their Master would here be healed and forgotten.

The Sabbath had come round again; a week since he had given strength to the cripple. It was his custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath; and the congregation which met there had been familiar with him from his childhood, when he went with his supposed father, Joseph. The rabbi, or ruler, could not but have known him well. These rulers of the synagogue had a certain power of both trying and scourging heretics in the place itself. They could also excommunicate them, and lay a curse upon them; and Jesus knew that they would not be averse to exercising their power. But now he went to his accustomed place, looking round with a tender yearning of his heart towards them all; from those who sat conspicuously in the chief seats, to the hesitating, inquisitive villager, seldom seen in the congregation, who crept in at the door to see what was going on.

For all the people of Nazareth must have been filled with curiosity that day. Their townsman had become famous; and they longed to see him,

and to witness some miracle wrought by him. Almost all had spoken to him at one time or another; many had been brought up with him, and had been taught by the same schoolmaster. They had never thought of him as being different from themselves, except perhaps that no man could bring an evil word against him; a stupendous difference indeed, but not one that would win him much favor. Yet here he was among them again, after a year's absence or so, and throughout all the land, even in Jerusalem itself, he was everywhere known as the Prophet of Nazareth.

When the time came for the Scriptures to be read, Jesus, either called by the minister, or rising of his own accord, stood up to read. It must have been what all the congregation wished for. The low platform near the middle of the building was the best place for all to see him; their eyes were fastened upon him, and their satisfaction was still greater when he sat down to teach them from the words he had just read. They were astonished at the graciousness of his words and manner, and before he could say more than, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled," they began whispering to one another, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

There is nothing strange or unnatural in this conduct, nor indeed anything very blamable. It is precisely what would take place among ourselves now under the same circumstances. Jesus was grieved, though we cannot suppose him to have been disappointed. He knew they wanted to see him do something like what he had done in Capernaum. His sinless life had been neither a sign nor a wonder to them; so blind were they, and so hard of heart. But if he would do some astonishing work they would believe in him. "No prophet is accepted in his own country," he said, and leaving the verses he was about to explain to them, he went on to remind them that both Elijah and Elisha, their wonder-working prophets of olden times, had passed over Jewish sufferers to bestow their help on Gentiles. They could not miss seeing the application. If they rejected him, he would turn to the Gentiles.

A sudden and violent fury seized upon all who were in the synagogue. This threat came from the carpenter's son! They rose up with one accord to thrust him out of the village. As they passed along the streets the whole population would join them, and their madness growing stronger, they hurried him towards a precipice near the town, that they might cast him down headlong. But his brethren and disciples were there, and surely among the people of Nazareth he had some friends who would protect him from so shocking a death at the hands of his townsmen. He passed

through the angry crowd, and went his way over the green hills, which not long before had seemed to promise him rest and shelter from his bitter foes. He had been accused of breaking the Sabbath seven days ago; who was breaking the Sabbath now? The full time was come for all this formalism of worship to be swept away, and for Christ to proclaim himself Lord also of the Sabbath. Did Jesus linger on the brow of that eastern hill looking down upon the village which nestled at the foot of the cliff? So quiet it lay there, as if no tumult could ever enter into it. The little valley, green and fresh in the cool spring-time, was bright with flowers, like a garden amid the mountains. He had loved this narrow glen as only children can love the spot where they first grow conscious of the beauty of the world around them. Here his small hands had plucked his first lilies, more gorgeously apparelled than Solomon in all his glory. Here he had seen for the first time the red flush in the morning sky, and the rain-clouds rising out of the west, and had felt the south wind blow upon his face. Upon yonder housetops he had watched the sparrows building; and upon these mountains he had considered the ravens. The difference between now and then pressed heavily upon him; and as he wept over Jerusalem, he may have wept over Nazareth. No place on earth could be the same to him; and when he lost sight of it behind the brow of the hill, he went on sadly and sorrowfully towards Capernaum.

# CHAPTER VII.

# Capernaum.

THOUGH Galilee was somewhat larger than Judæa, it was in reality but a small province, not more than seventy miles in length, or thirty in breadth. This again was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee; the latter called Galilee of the Gentiles. The district in which Jesus worked most of his miracles, and went preaching from town to town, was very small indeed, a circuit of a few miles tending south and west of Capernaum, which for a short time now became his home. This part of Galilee is a lovely rountry, abounding in flowers and birds; and at his time it was thickly populated, with small towns or villages lying near one another, and farmhouses occupying every favorable situation. The lake or sea of Galilee is about thirteen miles long, six broad, and all the western shore was fringed with villages and hamlets. Nowhere could Jesus have met with a more

busy stir of life. Not only Jews dwelt in this region, but many Gentiles of all nations, especially the Roman and Greek. His ministry in Judæa, if the Pharisees had suffered him to remain in Judæa, would not have been so widely beneficial as in this province, where the people were less in bondage to Jewish customs and ritualism.

It is at this point that Matthew, Mark, and Luke alike begin the history of our Lord's work. What we have so far read has been recorded for us in John's gospel alone, with the exception of the visit to Nazareth, which we learn from Luke. Jesus had already some friends and believers in Caper-There was the nobleman whose son he had healed several weeks There were Andrew and Peter, to whom he had been pointed out before. by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God. It was quickly noised abroad that Jesus of Nazareth was come to the town, and multitudes flocked together, though it was no holy day, to hear the words he had to teach them from God. They found him upon the shore of the lake, and in order that all might see and hear him, he entered into a boat belonging to Peter, and asked him to push out a little from the bank. It was early in the morning of the day after he had been thrust out of his own village; and now, sitting in the boat with a great multitude of eager listeners pressing down to the water's edge, he spoke to them the gracious words which the people of Nazareth would not hear.

The sermon was soon over, for the listeners were working men, and had their trades to follow. Jesus then bade Peter to put out into the deep waters, and let down his net for a draught. Peter, who must have heard of the miracles Jesus wrought, though he had never seen one, seems to have obeyed without expecting much success. But the net enclosed so many fishes that it began to break, and his own boat, as well as that belonging to his partners, John and James, became dangerously full. No sooner had Peter reached the shore, where Jesus was still standing, than, terrified at his supernatural power, he fell at his feet, crying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." "Follow me," answered Jesus, "and I will make you fishers of men." Andrew and Peter immediately forsook all to attach themselves closely to Jesus; and the same morning John and James left their father Zebedee for the same purpose.

The next Sabbath day, which was probably not a weekly but a legal Sabbath, coming earlier than the end of the week, Jesus entered the synagogue at Capernaum with his band of followers, four of whom were well known in the town. The synagogue here was a much larger and more

imposing place than the one at Nazareth; and no doubt it would be filled with a congregation as crowded and attentive. Whilst Jesus was teaching them, an unlooked-for interruption came, not this time from the fury of his listeners, but from the outcry of a poor man possessed of a devil, who had come in with the congregation. Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, and the man was cast down in the midst of the synagogue in convulsions, with the people crowding round to help. But when the devil had come out of him the man himself was uninjured and in his right mind. Such a miracle, in such a place, spread far and wide, and with great swiftness, for all who had seen it wrought would be eager to speak of it.

At noon Jesus went with Peter to his house for the usual mid-day meal. Here he healed the mother of Peter's wife of a great fever so thoroughly that, feeling neither languor nor weakness, she arose and waited upon them. In the afternoon probably he went to the synagogue service again, to be listened to more eagerly than ever.

We can imagine the stir there would be throughout Capernaum that afternoon. Fevers were very prevalent in the spring and autumn, and it is not likely that Peter's mother was the only sufferer. There was no one there as yet to cavil at miracles being worked on the Sabbath-day; still the people waited until the sun was set, and then in the brief twilight a long procession threaded the streets to the house where Jesus was known to be, until all the city was gathered about the door. And as the light faded in the clear sky, a number of little twinkling lamps would be kindled in the narrow street, lighting up the pale sickly faces of the patients who were waiting for the great Physician to come by. We see him passing from one group to another, missing not one of the sufferers, and surely saying some words of comfort or warning to each one on whom he laid his healing hand—words that would dwell in their memories forever. All had faith in him, and all were cured of whatsoever disease they had.

It must have been late before this was over, and the crowd dispersed to their homes. It seems as though our Lord, after this busy day of active ministry and untiring sympathy, was unable to sleep; for, rising a great while before the dawn, he sought the freshness of the cool night air and the quiet of a lonely place, where he could pray, or rather speak to his Father unseen and unheard. He trod softly through the silent streets, lately so full of stir, and made his way to some quiet spot on the shore of the lake, pondering, it may be, over the strange contrasts in his life, his rejection by the Nazarenes, and the enthusiastic reception of him by the city of Capernaum.



As soon as it was day, however, the grateful people, discovering that he was not in Peter's house, urged his disciples to lead them to the place where he had found a brief repose. The disciples would probably require little urging, for this was the homage they expected their Master to receive. They came in multitudes, beseeching him to tarry with them; for, li! 3 Nicodemus, they knew him to be a teacher from God, by the miracles he had done. This host of friends crowding about him to prevent him from departing from them must have given him a moment of great gladness. But he could not stay with them, for he must go to preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, and if he found faith there, to perform the same wonderful and tender miracles he had wrought in Capernaum.

For the next few days Jesus, with five or six disciples, passed from village to village on the western coast of the lake, and in the plain of Gennesaret, a lovely and fertile tract of land, six or seven miles long, and five wide, surrounded by the mountains which fall back from the shore of the lake to encircle it. It was thickly covered with small towns and villages, lying so near to one another that the rumor of his arrival brought the inhabitants of all the cities to any central point where they heard that he was staying. Herod had built a city at the south of the plain and called it Tiberias, after the Roman emperor; but probably our Lord never entered its streets, though all who desired to see and hear him could readily find an opportunity in the neighboring villages. It was in one of these places that a leper, hopeless as his case seemed, determined to cast himself upon the compassion of this mighty prophet. No leper had been healed since the days of Naaman the Syrian; yet so wonderful were the miracles wrought by Jesus, so well known, and so well authenticated, that the man did not doubt his power. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," he cried. He soon discovered that Christ's tenderness was as great as his power. touched him; and immediately the sufferer was cleansed. The leper noised it abroad so much, that Jesus was compelled to hold himself somewhat aloof from the town, and keep nearer to the wild and barren mountains, where the plain was less densely peopled, until a day or two before the Sabbath he returned to Capernaum, at the northern extremity of the plain. During those few days his journeyings had been confined to a very limited space, the beautiful but small plain of Gennesaret, with its thick population and numerous villages, where he could teach many people, and perform many miracles with no loss of time in taking long journeys.

During the week Capernaum had been in a fever of excitement. It was

quite practicable for many of the inhabitants to go out three or four miles to the spot where Jesus was, for the day, and return at night with the story of what he was doing. The excitement had not been lessened by the arrival of a party of Pharisees from Jerusalem itself, who were openly unfriendly to the Galilean prophet and his new doctrines. The Galileans naturally looked up to the priesthood at Jerusalem, especially to the Sanhedrim, as the great authorities upon religious points. There were, moreover, plenty of Pharisees in Capernaum, as in every Jewish town, who readily took up the opinions of these Pharisees from Judæa, and joined them eagerly in forming a party against Jesus and his innovations. No doubt they discussed the miracle wrought in their own synagogue on the first Sabbath day that Jesus was there; and were the more zealous to condemn him, because none of them had seen the sin of it before it was pointed out by their keener and more orthodox brethren from Jerusalem.

No sooner, then, was Jesus known to be in the house at Capernaum than there collected such a crowd that there was no room to receive them; no. not so much as about the door. But some of the Pharisees had made good their entrance, and were sitting by cavilling and criticising in the midst of his disciples. At this time the friends of a paralytic man who were not able to bring him into the presence of Jesus, carried him to the flat roof of a neighboring house, and so reaching the place where he sat to teach all who could get within hearing, they took up the loose boards of the roof and let down their friend before him. Jesus, pausing in his discourse, said first to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" words that filled the Pharisees with horror, yet with secret satisfaction. "Who is this?" they say to one another; "who can forgive sins but God alone?" "You cannot see that his sins are forgiven," answered Jesus, "but I will give you a sign which you can see. It is easy to say, Thy sins be forgiven; but I say unto thee, O man, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Even the Pharisees, the less bitter Pharisees of Galilee at least, were silenced by this, and were for once touched with fear of this Son of man, who had power on earth to forgive sins. They glorified God, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day."

But the day was not ended. Jesus, as his custom was, went down to the shore, where he could teach greater numbers than in the narrow streets. As he was passing along he saw a tax-collector sitting in his booth gathering tolls for the hated Roman conquerors. Such a person was singularly offensive to all Jews, but especially so to the Pharisees, who looked upon publi-

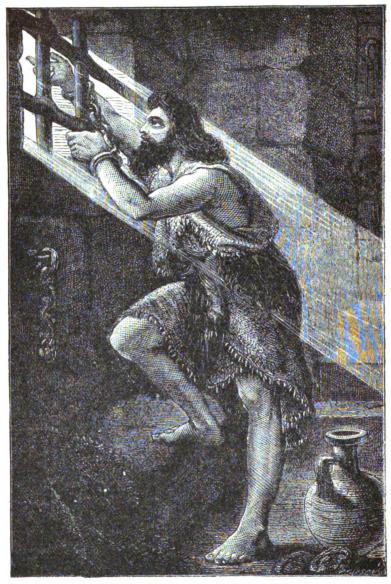
cans as the most vicious and degraded of men. Mark tells us this man was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, the uncle of Jesus by his marriage with Mary, his mother's sister. If so, he was a reprobate son, probably disowned by all his family, to whom he was a sorrow and disgrace. The presence of Jesus and his brethren in Capernaum must have been a trial to him, bringing back to mind the days of their happy boyhood together in Nazareth, and making him feel keenly the misery and ignominy of the present. But now Jesus stands opposite his booth, looks him in the face, not angrily but tenderly, and he hears him say, "Levi, follow me!" And immediately he arose, left all, and followed him.

The same evening, Levi, or Matthew as he was afterwards called, gave a supper at his own house to Jesus and his disciples; and, no doubt with our Lord's permission, invited many publicans like himself to come and meet him and hear his teaching. The Pharisees could not let such a circumstance pass uncriticised. For their part, their religion forbade them eating even with the common people, and here was the prophet eating with publicans and sinners. This was a fresh offence; and Jesus answered only by saying, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." No defence was offered, and no excuse made. But there was a sad sarcasm in his reply which must have stung the consciences of some of them. Were they the righteous, whom he could not call into the kingdom of God?

# CHAPTER VIII.

# Foes from Jerusalem.

A S spectators at Matthew's feast were two of John's disciples, who had been sent by their master with a strange question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" John had now been imprisoned for some time in a gloomy dungeon on the desolate shores of the Dead sea. His disciples, who were inclined to be somewhat jealous of the younger prophet, had brought him word of the miracles wrought by Jesus, but wrought upon the Sabbath day in direct antagonism to the Pharisees, and, as it seemed, to the law of Moses. The very first miracle at Cana of Galilee was altogether opposed to the austere habits of John, who had never



"John calling anto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus."—Luke vii. 19.  $\,\,$  916

tasted wine. There was something perplexing and painful to him in these reports; and he had nothing else to do in his prison than brood over them. Was it possible that he could have made any mistake—could have fallen under any delusion in proclaiming his cousin Jesus as the promised Messiah? Had he truly heard a voice from heaven? Could this be indeed the Son of God, who mingled with common people at their feasts, and visited Samaritans? He, who all his life long had lived in the open air, free from even social restraints, was becoming morbid in his captivity. It grew necessary to him at last to send his disciples to Jesus for some comforting and reassuring message.

When John's disciples came to Jesus, they seem to have found him feasting with the publicans—a circumstance utterly foreign to their master's custom. They felt themselves more akin to the Pharisees, and asked him, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" Jesus answered them that he was the bridegroom of whom John himself had spoken, and that as long as the bridegroom was with them they could not mourn. But the days would come when he should be taken away, and then they would fast. He would have no pretence at mourning or fasting to be seen of men. He would have no acting. These were days of joy, and it was meet to make merry and be glad when a brother who had been lost was found. Matthew was their brother, and he was restored to them; how could they mourn?

But Jesus kept John's disciples with him for a short time, that they might see how miracles were his everyday work, not merely a wonder performed in the synagogues on a Sabbath day, before sending them back to the poor prisoner in Herod's fortress. The next day was a Sabbath. The Pharisees kept closely beside Jesus, following him even when he and his disciples were walking through the fields of standing corn, possibly after the synagogue service, but before the Sabbath was ended. It was the second week of April, and the grain was growing heavy in the ear; perhaps a few ears of it were ripe, for in the lowlands about Capernaum it ripened earlier than in the uplands of Galilee. The disciples plucked the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands with the careless ease of men who thought it no harm, and who had forgotten the captious Pharisees beside them. The latter accused them sharply of breaking the law, and aroused Jesus to defend them by giving them instances from their own Scriptures and observances of the law of Moses being broken without blame. Then, pausing to give more weight to his last words, he added, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." He did not acknowledge their authority to make laws for the Sabbath. Nay, more, he claimed to be Lord of it himself.

Without doubt this answer deepened the enmity and opposition of the l'harisees; nor can we wonder at it. There was now no middle course they could take. If they acknowledged Jesus to be a prophet sent from God, they must own him as Christ, the Messiah, with a Divine authority over their laws and traditions. He was setting these at defiance, asserting himself to be Lord of the temple and Lord of the Sabbath. John had made no such claims, though it was well known that his birth had been foretold by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, his father, when he was ministering in the Holy Place. But John's career was at an end; and if Jesus was not taken out of the way he would turn the world upside down, and the Romans would bring them into utter subjection. Both religion and patriotism demanded that they should seek his death.

A day or two after this weekly Sabbath came a legal Sabbath, one of the holy days among the Jews. Jesus was in the synagogue; and there also. probably in a conspicuous place as if to catch his eye, sat a man with a withered hand. It seems almost as though he had been found and posted there in order to test Jesus. The Pharisees were growing eager to multiply accusations against him before they returned to Jerusalem for the approaching feast of the passover. Even they might feel that the sin of plucking ears of corn was not a very grave one. Here was a man for Jesus to heal. The case was not an urgent one; to-morrow would do as well as to-day for restoring the withered hand. But Jesus will show to them that any act of love and mercy is lawful on the Sabbath day, is, in fact, the most lawful thing to do. God causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, on that day as on any other. He looked round upon them all with their hard faces set against him; and he was grieved in his heart. Then, with the authority of a prophet, he bade the man stand up and stand forward in the midst of them. If they had been secretly plotting against him in bringing the man there, he was not afraid to face them openly. "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?" he asked. But the Pharisees from Jerusalem could not answer the question; and when he healed the man in the sight of all the people, they were filled with madness.

Possibly they had reckoned upon the miracle failing, for by this time it was understood that only those who believed in the power of Jesus could be healed, and they had not expected this man to have faith in him. It

seems that they left the synagogue at once, and though it was a Sabbath day they held a council against him how they might destroy him. They even entered into an alliance with the Herodians, their own opponents. For the Herodians favored the adoption of Roman laws and customs, against which the Pharisees had formed themselves into a distinct sect. But they were now ready to join any party, or follow any plan, so that they might destroy this common enemy.

It became impossible for Jesus to remain in Capernaum, and he left it immediately, probably the same evening, withdrawing to some mountain near the lake, where he continued all night in prayer to God. To a nature like his this bitter and pitiless enmity, aroused by acts of goodness only, must have been a terrible burden. They were his own people, not the heathen, who were hunting him to death-men who all their lives long had heard and read of God, his heavenly Father, who offered sacrifices to him, and gave tithes to his temple of all that they possessed. They knew, or ought to have known, what they were doing. There was no excuse of ignorance for them. All night he prayed, with the bright stars glittering above him in the blue sky, and the fresh breeze from the lake and the mountain, laden with the scent of flowers, breathing softly on his face. No sounds near him save the quiet sounds of night on the mountain side, and the wail of the curlew over the lake. This was better than sleep to him; and as the day dawned he was ready once more to meet his disciples, and to face the numerous duties coming with the sunrise.

His first act was to call his disciples to him, and from them he chose twelve to form for the future a group of attached followers and friends, who would go with him wherever he went and learn his message, so as to carry it to other lands when his own voice was silenced. Him his foes might and would destroy; but his message from God must not perish with him. Philip was one of them, he who had been with him from the first; and John, the youngest and most leved, who sat nearest to him at meal times, and who treasured up every word that fell from his lips, so that, when he came to write the history of his Lord, so many memories crowded to his brain of things Jesus had said and done, that he cried in loving despair, "All the world could not contain the books that might be written!"

Two at least, if not three, of our Lord's own family were amongst the chosen twelve: James, his cousin, of whom it is said he was so like Jesus as sometimes to be mistaken for him; and Judas not Iscariot, who, like the other kinsmen of Christ, asked him, even on the last night that he lived,

"Why wilt thou manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" Levi, if he was the son of Alpheus, was a third cousin, and each one wrote for us a portion of the New Testament. How much might these three have told us of his early life in Nazareth if no restraint had been laid upon them!

Then there was Peter, always the leader among the apostles, impatient and daring, so cager that he must always meet his Lord, and not wait for him to come to him; walking upon the sea, or casting himself into it to reach more quickly the shore where Jesus stood, exclaiming rapturously at one time, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and at another, with oaths and curses, repeating, "I know not the man." Of the rest we know little, save one dark name, read amidst the blackest shadows of the past. Why did Jesus call Judas Iscariot? Why did he make him a familiar friend, in whom he trusted? They went up together into the house of God, and took sweet counsel together. He gave and received from Jesus the kiss of friendship. To him was intrusted the wealth of the little band, and every trifling want of his Master's he had to supply, an office that brought him into the closest intimacy with him. Why was he chosen for this service? Was he the eldest amid this company of young men? a wise, shrewd man, cautious and prudent, where others might have been rash or forgetful? We do not know; but whilst Peter, James, and John followed their Lord into the chamber of Jairus' little daughter and up to the Mount of Transfiguration, Judas had the bag, and bore what was put therein.

# CHAPTER IX.

### At Nain.

IT was broad daylight now, no time for secret assassination, and, surrounded by his twelve devoted friends, Jesus returned to Capernaum, where his mother would probably be waiting in a state of anxious restlessness. As soon as it was known that he was entering the town, some of the rulers of the synagogue came to meet him, beseeching him to work a miracle in favor of a Roman centurion, whose servant was likely to die. The most bigoted amongst them could not deny that Jesus of Nazareth did many mighty works; and they could not decline to offer this petition to him when the centurion, who had built them a synagogue, commissioned them with it. The servant was healed without Jesus going to the house, the

centurion sending to say that he was not worthy that the Lord should enter under his roof. Even Jesus marvelled at the man's faith, and though he had just chosen twelve of his most trustworthy disciples, he cried, "I have not found so great a faith; no, not in Israel."

The next day, Jesus, followed by many disciples, both men and women, went out to visit the towns and villages lying westward of the hills which enclose the plain of Gennesaret. As he passed along his company grew in numbers, for everywhere had men heard of him, and those who had sick friends brought them out to the roadside that they might be healed. This day his journey was a long one, and he could not tarry by the way, except to work some such loving miracle. He was to rest in the little village of Nain that night; a place he knew quite well, for it was only five miles from Nazareth, and probably he had some friends there. Much people had gathered around him when he trod the steep path up to Nain; but before they reached the gate another multitude appeared coming out as if to meet them, yet there was no shout of welcome; instead there were cries and wailings for one whom they were carrying forth to the tombs outside the village.

Possibly Jesus knew both the young man who was dead and his mother. He hastened to her side, and said, "Weep not." Then he touched the bier, and those who were carrying it stood still. What was the prophet about to do? He could heal any kind of sickness, but this was death, not sickness. It was a corpse bound up, and swathed with grave-clothes; the eyes forever blinded to the light, and the ears too deaf to be unloosed. An awful silence must have fallen upon the crowd; and they heard a calm, quiet voice saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" He spoke simply, in a few words only; but the quiet voice pierced through all the sealed deafness of death, and the dead sat up, and began to speak. Then Jesus, perhaps with his own hands freeing him from the grave-clothes, gave him back to his mother. A thrill of fear ran through all the crowd, and as they thronged into Nain some said, "A great prophet is risen up among us," and others, "God has visited his people."

It has been thought that here, at Nain, dwelt Simon the Pharisee, who now invited Jesus to his house to eat meat with him. He was not one of our Lord's enemies from Jerusalem, but merely a member of the sect, which was numerous throughout all Judæa and Galilee. He probably regarded Jesus as a workingman from the neighboring village of Nazareth, though now considered a prophet by the people: and he did not offer to

him the courteous attentions he would have shown to a more honored guest. After his long and dusty walk Jesus sat down to Simon's table without the usual refreshment of having his feet washed, and his head anointed with oil.

But this slight, passed over by Jesus, was more than atoned for by a woman, who, coming in to see the supper with other townspeople, stood behind him at his feet, and began to wash them with her tears, and to wipe them with her long hair, kissing them again and again. Caring little who was watching her in her passion of repentance and love, she brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured the costly contents upon the feet she had washed and kissed. Yet the prophet seemed to take no notice of her and her touch. But Simon, the host, said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." The sinful woman's unheeded touch was more conclusive against him than all his miracles were for him. Simon did not have her thrust from his house; but there was a secret satisfaction in his heart at finding out that Joseph's son after all was not prophet enough to know who she was.

Did not Jesus know? Had he not felt every tear that had fallen upon his feet, and the touch of the trembling lips which dared not speak to him? He spoke a short, simple parable to Simon, and asked him a question, the answer to which condemned the self-righteous Pharisee. And then, turning to the weeping woman, he said, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.' Those who sat about him began then with their old murmur, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But he gave them no sign this time. No sign could be greater than the miracle wrought that day. As Jesus himself said in one of his parables, "They will not be persuaded, no, not if one rise from the dead."

# CHAPTER X.

# Mighty Works.

EAVING Nain, Jesus, with a large number of followers, including the apostles, and certain women who ministered to them of their property, passed through all the villages of that neighborhood, gradually working their way back to Capernaum. It was some time during this

week that Jesus dismissed the disciples of John the Baptist, bidding them tell him all they had seen and heard, and adding to his message a gentle reproof, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." He knew how many were already offended; and how the cause of offence must take deeper and deeper root, until the scandal of the cross came to eclipse every dream of glory in his followers. The message thus sent to John in his prison, with the marvellous tidings of the signs and wonders wrought, and the report of the new doctrines, must have greatly strengthened and comforted the prophet during the short time that remained to him of life.

The circuit from Nain to Capernaum, though short, was one of great exertion and fatigue; yet when they reached the latter town, and were in need of rest, so great a multitude came together again immediately, that they could not so much as eat bread. Jesus could not attend to his own needs, whilst others were crying to him for help, or crowding round him for instruction. His meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; and the bitter enmity of the Pharisees warned him that what he had to do must be done quickly. But his relations thought it was quite time to interfere with this self-forgetful zeal, and they sought to take hold of him, saying, "He is beside himself." They did not yet believe in him, for they could not get over the impression made upon them by his homely simple life amongst them, when he worked at a trade like themselves, apparently unconscious of being different from them. Probably their words only meant that he was carried into extremes by his burning enthusiasm. But the Pharisees from Jerusalem, who were still hanging about him, caught up the hasty words, and bitterly exaggerated them. "He hath Beelzebub," they cried, "and by the prince of the devils he casteth out devils." Jesus then called them to him, bidding the crowd make way. It was an extraordinary scene. There stood the powerful enemies from the chief city and the chief priests of the nation, strong in their reputation for religion and for righteousness, face to face with the young but well-known prophet of Nazareth, who boldly and solemnly in the hearing of all the people warned them of the sin they were committing. blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and declared that if it was persisted in there was no forgiveness for it.

In the meantime his mother, whose spirit could not be as brave for her son as his was for God, came to the outskirts of the throng with some of his cousins, and sent a message to him, which reached his ears as he finished his warning to the Pharisees. "Behold," they said, "thy mother and thy

brethren stand without, desiring to see thee." It was no moment for such a message to come. His kinsmen, though we cannot think his mother could have taken a part in it, had given occasion to the Pharisees to say that he had a devil; and it was necessary that all should know that he owned no authority in them, and could not submit to any interference. Dearly as he loved his mother, even she must cease to look upon him as a son whom she might command. Solemnly and emphatically he pointed to his apostles, and to the women who had come into the city weary and hungry as himself. "Behold my mother and my brethren," he said, "for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The remainder of the day was one of ceaseless activities. So many persons came in from other towns that Jesus, as his custom was, led them down to some convenient spot on the shore, and there entered into a boat, so as to be seen and heard by all. He taught them by parables, by many parables, and by nothing else than parables; a charming and fascinating mode of teaching to these imaginative eastern people, who carried them home in their minds to ponder over, and find out their hidden meaning. There was no need for them to be learned in the law: the common occupations of every day served as lessons for them; sowing their seed, or mixing their meal with yeast, was the symbol of the kingdom of heaven which had come among them.

At last the sun sank behind the western hills, and evening closed in. The disciples sent away the crowds from their exhausted Master. One of his hearers, a scribe even, for he had won some friends among the ranks of his foes, came to him, saying, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus was weary in body, and depressed in spirit. Capernaum lay there close by, but it was no safe place for him to spend the night in. He had already decided that it was better to cross over the lake to the eastern side, where his enemies might not care to follow him; and he answered the scribe in those mournful and most memorable words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The sky was darkening, and the stillness of night coming on: the birds were singing their last songs; and the wild beasts were creeping forth out of their dens which had sheltered them all day. But for him there was no place of rest, save the deck of the boat; no bed, except a pillow, on which his aching head could lie. Yet perhaps the scribe followed him: for a little fleet of fishermen's boats sailed out after him into

the gathering darkness, following the bark, in which the Master was soon sleeping, for very weariness, near the helmsman who was steering for the eastern shores.

The lake of Galilee, like all inland lakes, is subject to sudden storms of wind, which sweep down the ravines between the mountains with great force. Such a gale came on this night with so much fury, that even those disciples who, as fishermen, were quite at home on the water, were filled with terror. The eager followers in the other boats must have been still more alarmed as the waves beat over them, and filled their small vessels. No one but Jesus could have been asleep, but he slept soundly; and it was not till they called him that he awoke. "Master," they cried, "carest thou not that we perish?" Yes, he cared. He cared even for their fears; and though there was no danger of their perishing whilst he was with them in the boat, he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and immediately there was a great calm. Probably he fell asleep again; but all the crews of that little company of boats were exceedingly afraid, asking one another, "What manner of man is this, hungry and thirsty, and worn out with weariness like ourselves, yet even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The early morning found them on the eastern shore near Gergasa, which was in the tetrarchy of Philip, a just and moderate prince, very different from his brother Herod, who ruled over Galilee. Here, at least, Jesus might expect to find shelter and rest. But no sooner had he landed than a terrible demoniac, whose dwelling was among the tombs near the town, rushed down to the shore to meet him. So fierce and violent was he that no man dare pass that way, and always, day and night, the unhappy wretch was crying and cutting himself with stones. Jesus at once commanded the legion of evil spirits to come out of the man; but gave them permission to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding near at hand; upon which the whole herd, in number about two thousand, ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked in the waters. Those who kept them fled into Gergasa, and the inhabitants immediately came out to see who it was that had done this mischief. But upon finding their fierce and powerful countryman clothed, and in his right mind, they were afraid; and learning by what miracle he had been restored, they confined their resentment at their loss to beseeching Jesus to quit their coast.

Wet and hungry as he was, Jesus returned to the boat, bidding the poor man, who wished to follow him, rather to go home to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him. Though the Gerga-

senes would not receive him, he would leave them a witness to tell of his love and power. And now, driven away from that inhospitable coast, he returned towards Capernaum, giving up the hope of a few days' rest, far away from his knot of enemies, and his thoughtless crowd of followers.

No sooner was it known that his boat was on the shore than one of the rulers of the synagogue hastened down to him. His little daughter was lying at the point of death, and there remained no hope but in Jesus. He went at once with the father; yet he paused on the way to heal a poor woman who touched in secret the hem of his garment as he passed by. She had been suffering as many years as the child had lived, and Jesus could not neglect her for a ruler's daughter, though he should gain a powerful friend by it. There was a great tumult about the house when they reached it; the child was just dead, had died while Jesus lingered on the way to heal this poor woman, who had spent all that she had on physicians. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," he said; and they laughed him to scorn, knowing she was dead. Into her chamber he passed, suffering no one to go in but her father and mother, and his three most favored disciples; and taking the girl's hand into his own, he called to her, and her spirit came back again over the mysterious threshold it had just crossed.

But Jesus charged her parents that they should tell no man what was done; he charged them straitly. He would not have this young and happy life burdened with the weight of such a mystery; if possible the girl herself was not to know it. The widow's son at Nain might bear the burden, and meet the curious eye bent upon him, and answer as he could the eager questions asked about that other life of which he had caught a glimpse. But this child, just on the verge of happy girlhood, must be spared it all. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," he said, and he called her back to her place on earth as one who had only been wrapt in a deeper slumber than is natural.

# CHAPTER XI.

# A Holiday in Galilee.

JESUS seems only to have entered Capernaum for the sake of Jairus; for he did not stay there; but going away immediately, he went once more to Nazareth, where some of his cousins were still living. Very probably he knew from them that his townsfolk were now ashamed of their

savage assault upon him three weeks before. Since then they had heard of his wisdom and his mighty works, especially of that one at Nain, a village within sight of their own town. They were even hoping to have their own curiosity gratified by some wonder performed among them; but they could not get over the fact that he had been a carpenter in Nazareth, and that all his relations were known by them, poor, undistinguished people, who were considered of no account. Jesus himself marvelled at their unbelief, surpassing any he had yet contended against; and he could not do any mighty work, save that he healed a few sick folk, probably poor people, who knew him better than the wiser and richer men.

From Nazareth he sent out his apostles by two and two to make a short circuit of the towns lying about before meeting him again on an appointed day near Capernaum; for it was safer to be close upon the shores of the lake, whence at any time he could seek refuge in the dominions of Philip, rather than in any of the country places from which there could be no speedy way of escape from his enemies. He himself went round the villages teaching. The district travelled over thus was a small one, and by the separation of the apostles into six parties, every village would be quickly visited. These little places lay close together, and only a central spot would be needed for the gathering of congregations; the Galileans seeming to be always ready to flock together at the first hint of any excitement.

The first news that reached Jesus, when he returned to the neighborhood of Capernaum, was that of the cruel death of his cousin, friend and fore-runner, John the Baptist, whose disciples were come to bring him the tidings. The murder of their prophet must have stirred the people to deep indignation, and wounded the tender heart of Christ most keenly. But at the same time his apostles met him, full of triumph at the wonders they had themselves performed during their short separation from him. To some of them John the Baptist had been almost as dear as Jesus was now; and thus two currents of strong agitation ran counter to one another. Jesus himself felt in need of some hours of quietness in which to mourn over his loss, and to hear from his apostles what they had done and taught. But so long as they remained on the western shore of the lake there was no hope of gaining any such leisure time; and he entered into a boat with his disciples and passed over to the other side.

They landed in a solitary spot on the north of the lake, not more than three or four miles east of Capernaum, where the hills shut in a small plot of tall green grass, not yet dried up by the summer's heat. But the multi-

tudes of people from whom they had intended to escape for a little while, seeing them depart, set out on foot along the shore, and keeping the boat in sight, with its sails fluttering over the glistening water, they outwent it in speed. It was probably the day before the passover supper, which was kept at Jerusalem; a day on which no work was done in Galilee: and thus the people gathered from every village and farm-house, and from every fishing hamlet on the shore, until when Jesus reached the desert place near Bethsaida, one of the largest crowds that could ever have collected about him, numbering five thousand men, besides women and children, were waiting to receive him.

He was filled with compassion for them, for they were as sheep having no shepherd. No doubt the tidings of John's murder in prison was fresh among them; and our Lord knew how deeply their hearts felt the loss of such a teacher. He began to teach them in this little temple with the clear blue sky above them; and was not weary of teaching, nor they of listening, until late in the afternoon, when his disciples asked him to send them away before There was a lad in the crowd who had brought with him five barley loaves and two small fishes, most likely in the hope of selling them among so many persons, and pushing himself forward in the crowd, as lads are apt to do. Jesus bade the disciples bring them to him; Judas perhaps grudging the money he was called upon to spend for such a purpose. Then he told them to make the company sit down in fifties, the tall, green grass forming couches for them on which they could rest, as in the Paschal supper they were enjoined to "sit down leaning," not standing, as if they were The command of our Lord was well understood by them; they sat down leaning upon these natural couches as their brethren up in Jerusalem would so rest, when in a few hours they would eat the Paschal supper.

It was a suitable ending for the holiday. The sun was still shining in the west, nor when it went down was there any fear of the crowd missing the way to their homesteads, for the full moon was ready to rise beyond the eastern hills, flooding every mountain track, and every narrow village street, with its silver light. The season was the most delicious of all the year; and the cool air from the lake was sweet and fresh, not chilly or damp. Children were there, some stealing up to the Master's feet, and may be getting a piece of bread from his hand; their laughter and their voices mingling with the graver hum of older people. What a surprise too for the disciples as they began to understand their Master's purpose! This was such a miracle as the Messiah was expected to perform. A table furnished in the

wilderness, as in the times of Moses, when he gave them bread from heaven to eat. What was giving sight to a few blind folk, or even raising from the dead a widow's son in a distant village, compared to this large, public, kingly miracle of feeding thousands of his followers with so small a store of provisions?

There was but one happier hour for them in the future, when they followed their Master in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a year later. But now as they went about among the companies, they spread the story of the wonder then being wrought, until the enthusiasm of the people outgrew all bounds. They resolved to take him by force, and make him a king, sure that thousands would now flock from all quarters to hail him as the Messiah. This was the very danger Jesus had sought carefully to avert, as it would bring him and his party into collision with the Roman government, whose soldiers were garrisoned in many parts of the country. He constrained his disciples, who were unwilling to lose this hour of promised greatness, to set sail, and go on before him, whilst he sent the multitude away. When they were gone, whose wishes and plans were so different from his own, he dismissed the crowds, who obeyed him the more readily as now the night was at hand, and many of them had far to go on foot.

At last, then, Jesus was alone, and, in need of rest more than ever, in need of a moment or two in which he could mourn over his friend, in need of close communion with his Father, he went up into the mountain, at the foot of which he had been laboring all day. The Easter moon shone down upon him full and clear out of the cloudless sky, and lighted up the waters of the lake in which his disciples were rowing hard against the wind to reach the point of the shore he had directed them to steer for. He saw them driven out of their course by the wind into the midst of the lake; but still he lingered on the mountain side hour after hour. Is it possible that, bowed down by the death of John, a foretaste of his agony in Gethsemane made this season of solitude one of bitterness and sorrow? Was his soul exceeding sorrowful within as he watched his faithful followers toiling on the lake apart from him? When the next passover came, the eternal parting would come, when they must sail out into the fierce storm of life alone, without him in the ship; living by the faith, of which they yet showed so little sign. Next passover! Where would they be? What loss would they have to bear then? How would they bear it?

Still he saw them tossing about on the rough moon-lit sea, until, when the fourth watch of the morning was near, he resolved to give them a proof

of his power, which, in after years, every moonlight night, and every fresh-burst of life's storm, would bring to their minds. They, looking across the stormy waves, beheld him walking towards them on the sea; and they cried aloud with fear and trouble, for their Lord was coming to them strangely, in no familiar manner. Peter, bolder than the rest, attempted to go to meet him, but his courage failed, and he would have sunk but for the outstretched hand of his Master. When they entered into the boat, the wind ceased, and they, not considering the miracle of the loaves and fishes, were sore amazed within themselves, beyond measure. Their Master, possessing this marvellous power, still refused to be made a king! Their hearts, too hard yet to understand, could not perceive why he steadily opposed all such ambition.

They landed on the plain of Gennesaret, and walked northward to Capernaum, where they were met by numbers of those who had been fed in the desert the day before. It was the first day of the passover, a solemn Sabbath, and Jesus taught in the synagogue openly, and without any opposition, except the murmurs of those who were disappointed by his steady rejection of their desire to proclaim him king. His most hostile enemies, the Pharisees, were necessarily absent at the passover in Jerusalem. But from that day many of his disciples in Galilee left him, not being able to hear or rather to understand the hard sayings, and the reproaches with which he met them. "Ye seek me," he said, "because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Their love for him was too earthy to bear the test he proposed to them, so they went back, and walked no more with him.

"Will ye also go away?" asked Jesus, sadly, of his twelve apostles. Lord, to whom should we go?" cried Peter; "thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." "Not all," he answered; "have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Already he could point out the traitor in his little camp. Probably Judas had made himself unusually busy the day before in urging on the crowd to make him king by force. They all longed for him to assert his claims; his brethren were constantly urging him to manifest himself; John and James asked him to promise them the chief places in his kingdom; but Judas looked forward to be the treasurer of all the wealth of the Messiah King of Judæa, and no voice had been louder the day before, and no disciple so reluctant to obey, when he constrained them to set sail and leave him alone with the multitude. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas was to live in close fellow-

ship with him for a whole year longer; but even Christ could not cast out of him this demon of covetousness, whilst he was cherishing it in his secret heart.

#### CHAPTER XII.

# In the North.

URING this quiet week, with his enemies away, Jesus was busily occupied in the plain of Gennesaret and the region lying about, where, as he passed along the roads or through the streets, sick people were laid, that they might touch if it were but the hem of his garment. But this undisturbed, unopposed course of kindly healing and of teaching ended as soon as the Pharisees hastened back from Jerusalem, not willing to remain at home until they had got him into their power. They began by accusing him of setting aside the tradition of the elders—an accusation he did not But he answered them sternly, calling them hypocrites, and pointing out how they set aside the commandments of God. He deeply offended them by this reply, and the old danger of dwelling in Capernaum revived in greater force. Besides this, it was well known that Herod, the murderer of John, had a great desire to see Jesus; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, probably warning him of this danger. Herod's city, Tiberias, was on the western coast of the lake, south of the plain of Gennesaret, where Jesus had lately been journeying. It was not more than ten miles from Capernaum; and our Lord must often have been very near it, though it does not seem that he ever entered it.

It was only a few weeks since Jesus had been compelled to quit Jerusalem and Judæa; and now he found it needful to withdraw from the busy, crowded coasts of the lake of Galilee, and to seek the west of Galilee, where he was less known, and where he could quietly instruct his apostles, who as yet knew little of the message they were to teach when he was gone. He went farther north than he had ever travelled, to the very confines of the Holy Land, and to the shores of the Mediterranean sea, so vast and limitless, compared with the little lake of Galilee. But even here he could not be hid; for a certain woman, no Jewess, but a Gentile, who had already become acquainted with his name, no sooner heard of him than she came, and, falling at his feet, besought him to heal her daughter, who was possessed by a devil. Jesus did so, as a recompense of her own faith, praising it, as he

had done the faith of the Roman centurion, no doubt to the bewilderment of his disciples, who did not yet know, what the Samaritans had known, that he was the Saviour of the world.

From this northwestern limit Jesus and his disciples, probably never staying long in the same place, made their way gradually back to the eastern shore of the lake of Galilee, where they were in the tetrarchy of Philip. The country through which they passed was still more beautiful than the more southern parts of Galilee. They journeyed under the range of Hermon, and passed the high hill of Bashan, with the upper Jordan and the waters of Merom on their left hand, in the month of May, whilst the harvest was going on. A time of rest and possible happiness. Who was there besides the chosen twelve we do not know. Where they tarried and lodged, what route they took, we do not know. But at length they reached that inhospitable coast, where once before the inhabitants had besought the Lord not to sojourn with them.

But the fierce demoniac, whom Jesus had left to bear witness of him, had changed the minds of the people with regard to a second visit from this mighty prophet. They were now willing to receive him, and they brought to him a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. He led him away from the crowd, who in this country must have been half of them heathen, with no motive influencing their coming to him save that of curiosity. For the same reason, probably, to avoid the danger and distraction of a number of curious followers, he bade the man and his friends to tell no one of his cure; but they, not at all understanding his motive, proclaimed the miracle about all that region. Great multitudes in consequence came unto him, having with them lame, the blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and he healed them all, even though many of them were heathen, as if now he would teach his disciples that the blessings he brought to earth were not to be confined to the Jewish nation. And the people glorified the God of Israel.

Three days this mixed multitude remained with Jesus. He appears to have been dwelling upon one of the mountains on the shore of the lake, sleeping in the open air, as they must have done, for it was now the early summer, and the nights were warm. On the third day, when their provisions were exhausted, he said to his disciples, "I have compassion on this multitude, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way." We often wonder how the disciples could have been so dull as to answer in the manner they did, after the feeding of the five thousand on the passover

eve. But we must remember that in the former case the crowd consisted only of Jews, to whom they considered the Messiah sent; in this the multitude was more than half heathen, of the same race as those who had rejected Christ when he first landed on their shores. The disciples were jealous of these heathen followers, who brought discredit upon their Master among his own nation. They probably thought it impolitic for him to eat as he did with publicans and sinners, though they were at least sons of Abraham, whilst these were Gentiles, who had no part in the Messiah. More willing would even Judas have been to exhaust their little purse in buying bread than see him feed them as he had fed his own people.

But Jesus could not be influenced by any such reasons. These, like the Jews, were also as sheep without a shepherd. He repeated his miracle for them, spreading a table for them in the wilderness, as he had done for his fellow-countrymen, noticing the women and children, who were won to him by his tenderness, giving thanks to the Father of all, as though all there were his children, as well as the descendants of Abraham, his ancient friend. There seems to have been no excitement among them as there had been among the Galileans, who had wished to make him a king by force. The disciples themselves did not seek to fan any such excitement. The crowd separated at his bidding, and he passed over the lake into the near neighborhood of Magdala, a village within two miles of Tiberias, Herod's chief city. We know he had friends in Herod's household; and during the three days he had been staying on the opposite shore he might easily have received tidings that there was no immediate danger in thus venturing into the close neighborhood of Tiberias.

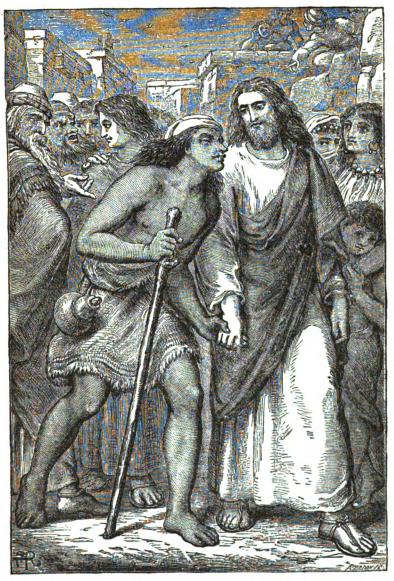
But though we cannot suppose that the Pharisees from Jerusalem had remained so long in Galilee, other Pharisees, whose hostility they had aroused against Jesus, very soon discovered his return among them, and came to him with the old demand for some sign from heaven. Some Sadducees were now joined with them, a sect with still greater political power than themselves, as the high priests and their families and most of the aristocracy were at this time belonging to it, though it possessed very much less religious influence over the nation. This union of political with religious power made the danger still greater to Jesus; and once more he was compelled to leave the western shores and seek safety in the comparatively friendly country of Philip, the tetrarch of Iturea.

On the eastern banks of the upper Jordan, close upon its fall into the lake of Galilee, still in Philip's dominions, stood Bethsaida; and our Lord,

who was now retracing his steps to the north, where he had before spent some time afar from his enemies, came to this place on his way. A blind man was brought to him, and he took him by the hand and led him out of the town to restore to him his sight; then bade him neither to go back to the town, nor to tell it to any of the townsfolk. He wished to avoid, if possible, any stir in this place, where he was so well known; for it was not more than an hour's walk to Capernaum, which he had not visited since the Pharisees had returned to it, after the passover. Almost as a fugitive now he was passing through a town where he had done many of his mighty works, and many of whose inhabitants had eaten of the food he had multiplied by miracle in the wilderness. Already his heart was heavy with the woe he afterwards pronounced against it. Here he must hide his miracle of restoring sight to one blind man, where hundreds had been witnesses of greater works than this.

Heavy-hearted, his disciples following him with bewildered spirits and disappointed hopes, Jesus went on northwards to the villages near Cæsarea Philippi, a summer city, which Philip the tetrarch had built amongst the hills of Hermon, close to the easternmost source of the Jordan, where a number of rivulets form first a small pool of water and then a stream, rushing through the thickets on the hill-side. It was the loveliest spot whither the wanderings of Jesus had led him. The sultry heat of the lake of Galilee was here exchanged for the cool shadows of groves of trees, and its sandy shores for a carpet of turf. Numberless brooks wound through the fields, scarcely to be dried up by the summer sun; for far above them rose the snowy peak of Hermon, glistening against the burning sky. It was such a place as he must have delighted in, if his heart had been less wounded by enmity, and his spirit less clouded by the sure end which he saw coming nearer and nearer upon him.

He did not here hide himself, as he had done near Capernaum. He called the people about him—the summer crowds, who had probably come north from the hotter atmosphere of the lower lands—and asked them, among other teaching, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" a solemn question for these holiday-makers to consider. It was here that Peter declared emphatically that he believed his Master to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God, in spite of all his own disappointment, and the mysterious deeds and sayings of his Lord. But when Jesus proceeded to speak more plainly to his apostles of the certain death which must be the end of the enmity which he excited, Peter



"He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town."—MARK VIII. 23. 935

could not bear it. He knew that as the Messiah his Lord had power a subdue his foes; nay, the prophecies declared that so should the Messiah act. It seemed to him so extraordinary a contradiction, not only of his own hopes, but of all the prophets had said concerning it, that he began to rebuke his Lord. Jesus so answered him that never more did any of his disciples interfere by remonstrance or objection to anything their Master did. "Let us go also, that we may die with him," was all they could say, when he seemed to run into needless danger.

# CHAPTER XIII.

# At Home Once More.

BUT though Jesus had rebuked Peter, he knew well the condition of mind that had made him speak so rashly. Six days after he took him with John and James into one of the high, solitary peaks of the range of Hermon, under which they had been sojourning. The ascent was a long one, and all the stillness of the mountains gathered round them as they climbed higher and higher into the purer air. They could see stretching southward their own land, which offered no sure resting-place to their The white snows glistened above them, and all the solemn influ ences of silence, and loneliness, and separation, wrapped them round. They forgot the sorrows of the past weeks as the Lord prayed with them on the mountain-height, lifted far above all the cares and ambitions of the earth beneath. Then, as Jesus prayed, a glory shone about him, which transfigured his beloved face, and made his raiment white and glistening as the snow, which dazzled them in the sunshine. And whilst, with dazzled eyes, they gazed upon him, two forms of Moses and Elias, the greatest of the prophets, appeared to them talking with Jesus. Their wondering ears neard them talk, not of the triumphs and conquests of Messiah's kingdom, but of the death which they shrank from thinking of. How long they listened to this heavenly discourse we do not know; but at length, sore afraid as they were, Peter spoke, not knowing what to say. "Master," he said, "it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Never would he choose to go down to the earth and common life again, if this heavenly vision would but remain. Even then, as he finished speaking, a cloud overshadowed

them, and a voice was heard to come out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And suddenly all had vanished, and there was no man any more, save Jesus only, with themselves.

It seems as if they stayed all night in the solemn stillness of the mountain, listening to much their Master had to tell them, and asking him such questions as came first to their minds. He told them that he should rise again the third day after the chief priests and Pharisees had slain him; but they kept that saying with themselves, questioning what it meant, and not venturing to ask him for his meaning. When the morning came they began their long descent to the valley below, at every lingering step drawing nearer to the stir and tumult of life, which they had desired to escape from, and which seemed so much poorer and more paltry than it had ever done before.

As they drew near to the valley they saw a great multitude of people surrounding the rest of the disciples; but as soon as they themselves were in sight, all the crowd, beholding Jesus, were greatly amazed, and, running to him, saluted him. It would seem as though some gleam of the indescribable glory still lingered in his face, as the face of Moses shone when he had been speaking with the Lord in Mount Sinai. Some scribes were there who had been questioning the nine apostles, and Jesus asked them what they had wanted. One of the crowd replied that he had brought his son, who was possessed with a devil, and as the Master was away, he had asked his disciples to cast him out, and they could not. Very probably they had attempted to do so, and had failed, so arousing a great excitement among the bystanders. The poor father's hope had been crushed, and his faith weakened, if not destroyed. "O faithless generation!" cried Jesus, "how leng shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me." Then, speaking to the father, he said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." He, looking into the divine face before him, cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." That was enough; his son was restored to him, and Jesus, passing on, went into the house where he and his disciples were sojourning, worn out with the exhausting events of the last twenty-four hours.

After this Jesus returned quietly through Galilee, wishing no man tooknow it. Some of his disciples, on this journey, disputed among themselves as to which should be the greatest, so little prepared were they for the end which he foresaw so plainly. He taught them what that end must be, but they did not understand him, and were afraid to ask him. But we must re-

member that the nine had not heard of the solemn transfiguration on the mount; for Jesus had straitly charged the three that they should tell no man.

As they approached Capernaum they found that at last it was safe to enter it, after their wanderings, and to be at home once more. The hottest months of the year were come, when there was almost a burning heat in the valley of the Jordan, and on the shores of the lake of Galilee; and very likely the wealthiest and most influential persons of the towns on the lake were gone away, or, at least, were less inclined to active exertions. Neither do any crowds seem to gather about Jesus, who indeed kept himself aloof from any public display. He spent his time in teaching his disciples and such persons as came to him, trying to prepare their minds for what was to come, and to fit them for their future work. A peaceful, happy few weeks for Mary, who had her Son again beside her for a little while; yet her heart would sink often as she heard his sayings, and began to see with a mother's fearful eye that no throne awaited him in the city of David.

It seems to have been his last sojourn in Capernaum, a quiet breathing time, in which he could taste once more the peace and rest of a home. Children were about him; and besides his mother, the women who were his friends and disciples, and whose greatest gladness was to minister to him. We may suppose that some of the apostles would resume for the time their fishing on the lake, and that James and John would dwell again under their father's roof. When they gathered together in the cool of the evening Jesus taught them the mysteries of the kingdom of God, not in parables, as he taught others. Now he put into precept and commandment that which he had set before them by his example. They were to tread in his steps, to go about doing good; to find it more blessed to give than to receive; to forgive their enemies; to be perfect even as their Father in heaven was perfect. Hard lessons! Yet the seed fell upon good ground, and, hidden there for some months, finally brought forth fruit a hundred-fold.

Before long, however, the peace of this short truce with his foes was disturbed by the approach of the autumnal Feast of Tabernacles. It was that joyous feast, after harvest and before the rains of winter, which attracted so many of the country folks up to Jerusalem, to dwell in booths for a week; when each worshipper carried to the temple branches of citron and myrtle, willow and palm, in his hands; and each day a glad procession attended a priest to fetch water from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher, to be afterwards poured at the base of the altar. Even the nights were made

jubilant with services in the temple, the lights in which lit up the house-tops of Jerusalem, with their booths of thick branches, and shone afar off in the darkness; whilst the sound of song, and the music of harps and lutes, cymbals and trumpets, echoed far and near in the stillness of the night.

The cousins of our Lord, who would naturally be more impatient even than his other disciples for a public assertion of his claims, now began to urge him to go up to the feast, which they were about to attend. We cannot suppose that they did not believe in him at all; they knew him to be mighty in works and in words; and they desired ambitiously that he should display his power to his disciples in Judæa, though they could not have been ignorant of the danger he must run. But as yet they did not believe him to be the Son of God. They could not understand his conduct, in claiming so much, yet refusing to be made a king, or at least the leader of a popular party against the Romans. Possibly they may have thought that if Jesus joined the caravan of pilgrims starting for the feast, he would not be able to withdraw himself from their enthusiasm, and would be carried forward to Jerusalem as their Messiah, when multitudes, who hated the Roman yoke, would rise to join him, and he would be forced to assume the position they wished for him to take.

But Jesus, discerning their motives, bade them go up to the feast alone; whilst he remained behind in Galilee, until after the caravan, with its everincreasing band of enthusiastic pilgrims, had gone on. Then, with his own little band of faithful friends, he set out for Jerusalem through Samaria, the nearest and least frequented route. In fact, no other pilgrims were likely to choose this way; for when Jesus himself sent forward some messengers to a village in Samaria, to make ready for them, the inhabitants would not supply them with any necessaries, would not even receive them into the village, because their journey was toward Jerusalem. But when James and John asked if they should not copy the example of Elijah, and call down fire from heaven to consume them, Jesus rebuked them, uttering one of the sayings which all his life through had been his motto, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village less bigoted, where, perhaps, he was known as the prophet who had passed by that way early in the year.

At the feast there was a good deal of argument and discussion about Jesus. He was sought for in the temple, amid the worshippers with their palm branches, but he was not to be found. Quietly all the people were talking

about him, some saying, "He is a good man;" others, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." The Pharisees had already widely spread their opinion that he was an impostor, and his miracles deceptions, by which the people were misled. But no one spoke openly of him for fear of the Sanhedrim, who possessed the dreaded power of casting an offender out of the synagogue, a punishment similar to that of excommunication.

In the midst of the feast, however, Jesus appeared in the temple, not quietly either, but openly in his office as teacher and prophet. The people were amazed at his boldness, and equally amazed at the inactivity of the Sanhedrim, who seemed reluctant to interfere with him at the first. They were in truth privately planning how to take him; but the feasts were so often the occasion of riot and confusion that they sought rather to lay hands on him in secret, so as to avoid any open disturbance. This the constant presence of his disciples and friends from Galilee made impossible during the week of the feast. On the last day, that great day of the feast, when the priests marched seven times round the altar, singing Hosannah, and the leaves were shaken off the willow boughs in the hands of the worshippers, and the water from Siloam was poured for the last time on the altar, then Jesus stood forth, before the crowded congregation, and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Many of the people upon hearing this saying, and feeling the awful courage of any prophet standing thus in their midst, and crying aloud words of such meaning, could not but believe that he was of a truth the Christ. Others asked, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" And there was a division among them, some being even willing to take him; but no man laid hands on him. The temple officers, who had been sent by the Sanhedrim to arrest him and bring him before them, were so impressed by his words and manner of speaking, that they dared not touch him, but chose rather to return to their masters, and own that never man spake like The Pharisees answered sharply that they, too, were deceived, though none of the rulers or Pharisees had believed on him; none but the common people, who were too ignorant to know the law. Nicodemus, who was his disciple, though secretly, now ventured to remonstrate, but met, with a sharp and sneering reply. After which every man went home; and Nicodemus probably took care that Jesus should be warned of the plots of the Pharisees.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

# The Last Autumn.

FROM that time Jesus appears to have spent his nights out of Jerusalem, only venturing to appear there in the daytime, when his friends were about him. On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, was a small village called Bethany. This low mountain was henceforth to be his favorite haunt, and this village his most frequent home. There lived in it a family of friends whom he loved dearly, with a marked and special friendship. They were people of some importance, and were well known in Jerusalem; and it was now, probably, that they often received him into their house as their beloved guest.

Early on the first Sabbath day, after the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus came to the temple, and sat down to teach in the treasury, which was a colonnade surrounding the court for women, the usual place for worship. Here, of course, most of the congregation could both see and hear him; and especially those who paused to cast in their gifts into the trumpet-shaped chests which stood against the wall. His teaching was interrupted by the questions and remarks of the Pharisees, who grew more and more malicious, until, at length, after calling him a Samaritan, and telling him he had a devil, they madly gathered up the stones which were lying by to be used in repairing part of the building, and would have stoned him to death in the courts of the temple itself, had he not hid himself from them, and passed by through their midst. No riot ensued, for, now the feast was over, the great mass of people were dispersed; and this, probably, gave them the courage to attack him thus suddenly and openly.

But no danger to himself could hinder him from a work of mercy. As he was passing from the temple his disciples called his attention to a blind man, who was, perhaps, begging at the gate by which they left the temple.

From this gate, which was at the northwest of the temple enclosure, there ran a causeway down into the lower city, where the poorer classes, to whom the blind beggar belonged, had their shops and houses. The disciples asked him which had sinned, the man or his parents, that he should be born blind. Jesus answered them this blindness was no effect of sin either in himself or his parents; and, repeating the words with which he had begun his sermon in the temple, "I am the light of the world," he anomted the poor man's eyes with clay, and bade him go to wash in

the pool of Siloam. Siloam lay south of the temple mount, and many a joyous procession had gone down to it for water during the feast. The blind beggar had to make his way through the busiest streets of the lower city, his eyes smeared with the clay. He must have been very well known in this poor neighborhood, and when he came back from Siloam, with his sight restored, there was a great excitement. Some among them disputed whether he was the blind beggar or no. They gathered about him, asking how his eyes had been opened, and he told them frankly all he knew. This Jesus, who was spoken of as one of those impostors who deceived the people of Galilee by false miracles, was he who had restored sight to him, although he had been born blind.

The escape of Jesus from their sudden attack must have left the Pharisees in a state of irritated disappointment; and their vexation was certainly not lessened when a throng of people from the lower city brought to them a man upon whom such a wonderful miracle had been wrought at the very moment of his escape. They had been carefully fostering the opinion that Jesus was an impostor, and here was direct proof to the contrary. They could seize only upon the one point which might be made to bear an evil aspect—"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." But some of the Pharisees themselves objected to this, asking, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" There was a division amongst them. They even referred to the beggar, asking him what he said of the man who had opened his eyes. "He is a prophet," he answered unhesitatingly.

Upon this they professed not to believe that the man had been blind, and they sent for his parents, both father and mother. They were timid people, poor, of course, in circumstances, and therefore the more afraid of being turned out of the synagogue, and so of losing their livelihood. They could not afford to be bold in behalf of their son. "He is of age," said the poor, trembling parents; "we know he is our son, and that he was born blind, but we do not know anything else. He shall speak for himself." It may have been, it probably was, the first time the man's eyes had seen his father and mother; he knew their voices, but their faces he now looked upon with his new power of sight, marvelling, no doubt, at the strange world at once opened to him, and unable to read as we do the expression of those about us. The frowns of the Pharisees, the downcast timidity of his parents, the eager gaze of his old neighbors, were a strange language to him.

The Pharisees questioned and cross-questioned the poor beggar, but he was a man of shrewd common sense, and of great courage, perhaps the courage of ignorance. He maintained firmly, that one thing he did know, whereas he was blind, now he could see. The blue heavens above, the splendor of the temple, the smoke rising from the altar, all those things of which he had heard so often, he could now see. At length, after being badgered into what seemed an outbreak of insolence from so mean a person, he cried, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Not long before the Pharisees had said to Jesus, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil!" These last words of the beggar so exasperated them that they immediately pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication, which, besides depriving him of his right as a Jew, would make him an alien and outcast in his father's house, amongst those kinsmen whose faces he had never yet beheld, but who would now turn away from him with shame and terror. Better for him if he had been left a blind beggar sitting at the gate of the temple.

But Jesus, who had bestowed upon him this blessing, now turned by the bigotry of the Pharisees into a curse, no sooner heard that he had been cast out of his synagogue, than he sought for him in his loneliness and misery. The blind man had boldly maintained that Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet come from God, in the face of those who were striving to put him to death. So when Jesus found him, stript of love and religious rights, without father or mother in the world, and shut out from the temple and its sacrifices for sin, he revealed himself to the wretched man as being not a prophet merely, but the Son of God, that God from whom the sentence of excommunication seemed to cut him off. There was no need of the temple and the sacrifices for him, if he would but believe in the Son of God, who was greater than the temple. "Lord, I believe!" cried the man, as he worshipped him who had opened his eyes. And now, probably, as he was cast out of all other fellowship, he would be admitted into the circle of the disciples, who were willing to brave any penalties threatened by the Pharisees, and who already formed a little society of their own.

From amongst the disciples who had been with him at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had chosen seventy, and sent them by two and two on a

similar missionary tour to that short journey of the twelve apostles, which had been made in Galilee in the spring. The Jewish tradition was that God had ordained seventy nations to inhabit the earth, and Jesus may have chosen this number to indicate that his mission was not to the Jews only, but to all the world. The seventy were directed to visit certain villages, whither Christ intended to go himself, chiefly in Judæa, where he appears to have remained until about the middle of December.

Judæa had little of the beauty which made Galilee so dear to Jesus; and it possessed none of those early associations, which make all men cling to the place of their early childhood. The hills of Judæa are bleak and bare; the season was that of the sad and waning autumn, when the drought of summer was not repaired by the winter's rains. The people, though more polished, were less trustworthy and less independent than the Galileans. Society was more corrupt and artificial; and Jesus mournfully likened the religious leaders to whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones, and declared that they made their proselytes tenfold more the children of hell than themselves. The political condition of the country was even worse than in Galilee, where there was at least a Jewish tetrarch. Judæa was under a Roman ruler, and its fortresses were filled with Roman soldiers. Riots against Pontius Pilate were frequent. Robbers infested the roads; and even between Jerusalem and Jericho, a highway between two chief cities, it was no uncommon occurrence to fall among thieves.

How Jesus avoided the snare of his enemies during these two months we are not told. But we must recollect they had no legal power to put him to death; they had failed in crushing him by a sudden outbreak in the temple; and the number and faithfulness of his followers preserved him from secret assassination. He passed from village to village, always dogged by the Pharisees, who hoped to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him to Pilate, who, though he did not trouble himself to interfere with a Jewish prophet, would speedily put an end to any political agitator. There was constantly some danger of Jesus appearing to him in this character, from the innumerable multitudes which gathered about him wherever he appeared; always a perilous sign when a country is ripe, as Judæa was, for rebellion.

It was during this time that Jesus probably made that visit to Bethany, when Martha is first mentioned as receiving him into her house, and being so much cumbered about much serving as to speak somewhat sharply to him, though he was both her Lord and her guest. "Lord, dost thou not

care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" she asked. "Bid her therefore that she help me." No doubt he had seen all this house-pride and hospitable impatience before, when his cousins in Nazareth had made feasts for their friends; and we can fancy him smiling at the hurried and weary woman. "Martha, Martha," he answered, gently, "thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

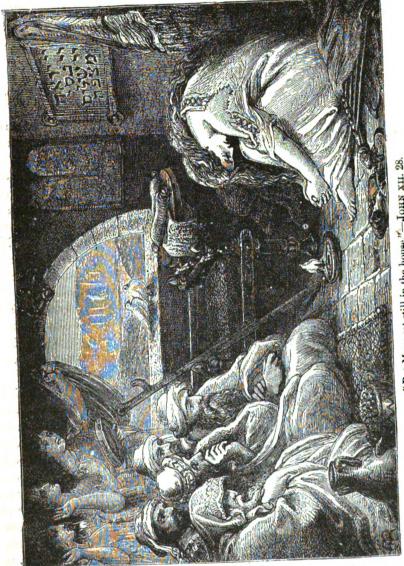
Once again, during these two months, the old blasphemy revived, that he was casting out devils by the prince of devils. The old accusation of breaking the Sabbath was also renewed. He was in some village synagogue, where he saw a poor woman bowed together so that she could not lift up herself. He did not wait for her to ask for help, but called her to him, and laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight. The ruler of the synagogue was very indignant, and addressing the people forbade them to come to be healed on the Sabbath day. "Hypocrite!" cried the Lord; "doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" For once all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for the glorious things that he had done.

The winter was now come, and with it the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. This feast, like that of Purim, was not one appointed by the law of Moses, and therefore it was not generally kept by the Galileans, or the Jews living far from Jerusalem. It was celebrated in honor of the reconsecration of the temple after a terrible and shameful pollution of it a hundred and sixty-six years before Christ. Comparatively a modern festival, it was however a time of great mirth and gladness; and it was called the Feast of Lights, from the custom of illuminating the city during its celebration. Once more Jesus resolved to show himself openly amidst his deadliest foes. There was a colonnade running round the court of the Gentiles, called Solomon's porch, which afforded shelter from the cold winds of winter. Here he chose to walk to and fro, teaching, as was his custom, those who crowded about him to learn. The Pharisees surrounded him in this place, asking him to say plainly if he were the Christ, or Messiah, probably with the hope that he would claim this kingly title, and so lay himself open to an accusation before Pilate. The Lord's reply afforded them no such ground, but he uttered words which excited their fiercest anger. Again they

took up stones to stone him; but he escaped out of their hands, and left Jerusalem to enter it but once more.

Jesus now withdrew altogether from Judæa, into the place beyond Jordan, where John had at first baptized. It was in the same valley, beside the same river, where he had spent the first summer of his public life, whilst John was still alive, and teaching and baptizing not far from him. Only twelve months had passed since he had left that quiet retreat, to enter upon a career full of change, of wanderings, of increasing difficulties and dangers. His enemies had laid wait for him; had never wearied of hunting him from place to place; had three times attempted his life at the feasts. own kinsmen did not fully believe in him; his numerous friends were bewildered and dissatisfied; and his disciples, though still faithful to him. were disappointed, and looked anxiously into the future. It was wintry weather; the sky was heavy with clouds, and storms swept across the land. The summer seemed also to have faded out of his life; all that gladness with which his God had crowned him above his fellows. Poor, homeless, and an exile; rich only in the friendship of a few fishermen and peasants who made themselves homeless and exiles for his sake; with a traitor always at his side, and a host of deadly foes conspiring against him: thus Jesus passed the last winter of his life.

Whilst he was in Perea many people came to him, who remembered what John the Baptist had said of him. John had not yet been dead twelve months, and the anger of the people against Herod had not died away. Many of them believed on Jesus, as he went about, according to his custom, from village to village, teaching, in homely parables, which took firm hold of the minds and memories of his hearers. Very possibly the Pharisees sought to get Herod to arrest him; but this he dared not do, so unpopular had he become by the murder of John. They tried, therefore, to frighten Jesus back into Judæa, and they came to him with a warning. "Get thee out, and depart hence," they said, "for Herod will kill thee." But Jesus had certain work to do in that country, and he was not to be driven from it by their cunning or Herod's. One of the miracles he wrought at this time in Perea was in the house of one of the chief Pharisees of that neighborhood, where he had been invited, that they might watch him. It was the Sabbath day, and a man was set before him afflicted with dropsy. As usual, Jesus did not hesitate to heal him, the lawyers and Pharisees finding nothing to say against his doing so. this he gave both to the guests and to his host certain rules concerning



"But Mary sat still in the house."-JOHN XII. 28.

feasts, which were very different from those usually observed. To this period also belong the parables of the Great Supper, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, and the Rich Man and Lazarus.

# CHAPTER XV.

#### Lazarus.

AZARUS, that name which Jesus had given to the poor beggar carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, was also the name of a friend whom he loved dearly, and of whom his mind was at this moment full. About the same time that the Pharisees had come to him with their cunning stratagem to drive him into Judæa, there had reached him a message from the home in Bethany: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, did not, because they could not, urge their Lord to come to them. The peril was great. Nay, if he had gone at once he would have fallen into the very snare his enemies had laid for him. He stayed, therefore, two days where he was, teaching the people as usual, and betraying no design of leaving that place. But on the third day, when the danger was somewhat passed by, though his disciples still remonstrated with him for venturing again to Judæa, he set out for Bethany. Thomas, the most timid and doubtful of the disciples, said to his companions, in a despair which proves the strength of his attachment to his Master, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

It was a toilsome journey, hurriedly and secretly taken. The disciples, like other men in a country of foes, must have been anxious and uneasy, not altogether seeing the necessity of this new peril. The Lord himself was probably troubled and sorrowful, for he knew that Lazarus was dead, and he sympathized with the grief of his sisters. On the fourth day after his death he reached the village, but did not enter it, only sending a message to the sisters that he had come. The house was filled with Jews from Jerusalem, which was only two miles away, and Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was near, rose up, and went out to meet him, lest he should be unaware of the risk he was running. But Mary was too deeply sunk in sorrow even to hear that he who loved them was so close at hand. It was not until he sent Martha to her, who told her secretly, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," that she knew he was there.

Mary did not possess Martha's characteristic caution and prudence. She rose up quickly, and hurried to seek Jesus outside the town where he was staying, without attempting to conceal her movements. A number of the Jews followed her, thinking she was going to her brother's grave to weep there. The whole company, weeping and mourning, came to the place where Jesus was waiting for Mary, in the midst of his anxious disciples. But the grief of the two sisters, and his own tears, saved him at this moment. They even wept with them, and exclaimed, "Behold, how he loved him!" In a sacred brotherhood of grief they led him to the cave where his friend had been lying for four days.

Some of them, who had known of the miracle performed on the blind beggar, asked among themselves if he could not have saved Lazarus from dying. But it was too late now. Here was the grave, with the stone laid upon it, beneath which the dead body had been decaying these four days. Even Martha objected to having the stone taken away. It may be that some among them had heard how the widow's son, at Nain, had appeared to come to life again when he was about to be buried; but how different that was to the case of a man so well known, who had been dead so long! Close by Jerusalem, too, where the rulers were seeking to put Jesus to death as an impostor!

But the stone was taken away, and all stood silent, looking on with awe. Did Jesus wish to see once again the form of his friend, now conquered by the last enemy, Death? He did not enter into the cave, but crying with a loud voice, which rang through the silence of the crowd and the stillness of the grave, he said, "Lazarus, come forth!"

How every heart must have throbbed! Was it possible that the dead ear could catch the sound, and the dead form move? Did they press round the cave, or shrink away in fear? We cannot tell; but the moment of suspense was short. They could hear a stir and movement within the sepulchre; and Lazarus, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face hidden from them by a napkin, appeared in the doorway on which all eyes were fastened. The deathly pallor of his face had vanished, and his eyes were bright again with life, before they could take away the cloth that hid it; and the limbs that had been bound in grave-clothes for four days were strong enough to carry him home to his house, across whose door-sill they had borne him in the stillness and helplessness of death.

Many of the people from Jerusalem who saw this miracle believed in Jesus. We may confidently suppose that for this night at least he was

secure from all attempts to arrest him; and that he could safely stay with the friends he had so marvellously blessed. But some of the bystanders went their way at once to the Pharisees to tell them what had been done. The time was at last come when the chief priests began to take a more active interest in crushing this prophet from Nazareth. They were mostly Sadducees; Caiaphas the high-priest, and Annas, his father-in-law, a most powerful man, being at the head of the Sadducees. Hitherto they had regarded Jesus with contempt, as one beneath their notice. But one of their leading tenets was the denial of the resurrection; and this strange story from Bethany could not but be exceedingly repulsive and alarming to them. They took counsel together with the Pharisees to put him to death; and as they, the aristocracy of the temple, had much more political power than the middle-class Pharisees, their antagonism greatly increased the peril of Jesus. Caiaphas, the high-priest, was exceedingly emphatic upon the necessity of destroying him, saying sharply to the counsel, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Jesus had two friends among these counsellors thus plotting his death, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; and possibly they gave him instant. warning of his increasing danger, for he left Bethany immediately, and that home which he had made so happy, to withdraw to Ephraim, a town on the borders of Samaria, where at any hour he could cross the frontier and place himself beyond the reach of both Sadducees and Pharisees. He stayed there not many weeks, and then began his last farewell circuit through Samaria and Galilee, as it would seem rather for the purpose of visiting these places once more, than of teaching or of healing. It was now the early spring, and the corn-fields of Samaria and Galilee would be already springing into life under the ripening sun; half-opened leaf-buds were green upon the trees; and the grassy turf was strewn with daisies, and lilies, and anemones of all colors. Probably he crossed the plain of Esdraelon, over which he had so often gazed from the hills of Nazareth. But we do not find that he ventured into any of the familiar villages; but rather, like one hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, the wandering Son of man turned aside out of Galilee, and descending into the deep valley of the Jordan, waited on the eastern bank of the river for his hour to come; that hour which was very soon to strike.

But even here he was not left alone in peace with his disciples. The spies, with whom he was always surrounded, came to him as usual with

perplexing and difficult questions. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" they asked. Herod, as we know, had put away his wife to marry Herodias, much to the displeasure of his people, who regarded it as a scandalous act. This question of divorce was one angrily disputed among the people, and especially among the Pharisees. scarcely be answered without giving deep offence to large numbers of persons. For once Jesus took the side of the bitter and bigoted Pharisees of the school of Shammai; and by so doing gave occasion to his own disciples to venture upon a remonstrance to him, saying the case of the man was hard. But the women, who were the real sufferers under the law, were greatly pleased; and immediately upon his answer, so wise and just, becoming known, they brought to him their little children, both girls and boys, that he might pray for them. The disciples somewhat bitterly rebuked their enthusiasm, and would have sent them away, had not Jesus interfered, being much displeased. He had come to raise woman to her proper position, and to make little children the care of all who would enter the kingdom of God. He ordered them, therefore, to be brought to him, and having laid his hands upon their heads, and blessed them, he left the place; probably lest the enthusiasm of the women should create too great a commotion.

Not long after this there came to him a rich young man, a ruler of a synagogue, who had kept the law from his youth up, and wanted some good thing yet to do. Quickly, Jesus put him to the test. "If thou wilt be perfect," he answered, "go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." He was exceedingly grieved at this reply, and went away sorrowful. Jesus, who, when he saw him, loved him, exclaimed mournfully, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Upon that, Peter began to contrast himself and his fellow-disciples with this rich ruler, saying, "Lo, we have left all to follow thee!" It was true; and Jesus must have felt deeply the faithfulness of his simple-minded followers. He promised them that they should receive the reward the young ruler had been seeking to obtain, even eternal life. But, as though he must check the vain hopes always at work in their hearts, he told them many that were first should be last, and the last first.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

# The Last Sabbath.

INGERING on the eastern banks of Jordan till a few days before the passover, Jesus was there no doubt joined by his mother, his kinsmen, and the women from Galilee, who had so often ministered to him, as they went up to Jerusalem for the feast. Numbers of pilgrims had already gone up before the feast-day to purify themselves; and both the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment that if any man knew where he was, he should tell it. They wished to take him quietly, before the great masses of the people were gathered together in the Holy City; but they began to fear that he would stay away, as he had done the year before. They asked one another in the temple, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"

Already Jesus was on his way, and was pressing onward, his face set towards Jerusalem. He went before his bewildered and troubled disciples, as though eager to get to his journey's end. The disciples were often depressed by his incomprehensible warnings, but still oftener they seem to have been dazzled by visions of some approaching splendor. Amongst the women who had joined them from Galilee was Salome, the mother of James She came to beg a boon from him—that her sons might sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom. Though the rest were much displeased with James and John because of this petition, they had frequently discussed among themselves which should be the greatest; and possibly Judas, who kept the common purse, felt himself of more importance than the others, and at least certain of being treasurer in the coming Jesus called them to him, and after telling them that whosoever among them would be the chiefest must be the servant of all, he added the beautiful saying, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

But what did his mother think of this kingdom of her son's? We do not know. She was now once more with him, treading the familiar, yearly pilgrimage which they had taken together for so many happy spring-tides. Probably, she partook more fully of the mood and spirit of Christ than his other friends; and though now and then there might be a flutter of timid hope in her mother's heart, his grave, sad face, and solemn warnings, must have prepared her for the darkness, not the splendor, of the coming hour.

The city of Jericho was a few miles from the Jordan, on the way to Jerusalem, standing in a magnificent grove of palm-trees, and amid gardens of balsam. Jesus was passing through the city, surrounded by a multitude of followers and curious spectators, when the chief of the taxgatherers, a rich man, who was desirous to see him, ran before, and climbed into a tree; for he was little of stature, and, in spite of his wealth, possessed no favor or influence with his fellow-countrymen, that they should make way for him in the press. Jesus, coming to the place, looked up, and called him by name. "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down," he said; "for to-day I must abide at thy house." Joyfully he descended from among the branches, and led the way to his dwelling-place. But at this all who saw it murmured. The man was a notorious sinner, one who had enriched himself by unfair means, besides engaging in an infamous trade. But Jesus had not called him without knowing his nature, and what influence he could exercise over him. A day or two before, when the rich young ruler had come to ask what more good things he should do, having kept the law from his youth up, Jesus had proposed to him as a test that he should sell all that he had, and give to the poor. We know how he shrank from giving up his riches. This very test Zaccheus adopted of his own choice. He stood up in the midst of his accusing fellow-citizens, and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." If the cheating of Zaccheus in his tax-gathering had been on any large scale, this restitution would leave him a poor man indeed. Jesus, knowing how hard it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham;" and he finished by perhaps his most beautiful and most characteristic saying, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Probably Jesus stayed that night in the house of Zaccheus, and set out the next morning for Bethany. A numerous body of friends and pilgrims as usual gathered around him to accompany him up the steep and rocky road, which led to the Mount of Olives, under the brow of which stood the little village where Lazarus lived. The day before, as he entered into Jericho, a blind man had heard him passing by, and asked who it was coming thus surrounded by a crowd. Now this blind man, with a comrade in the same plight, sat by the wayside, waiting for his approach. No sooner did they hear that Jesus of Nazareth was nigh, than they began to cry out to

him, a shrill, piercing cry, which reached his ear, even amid the babble of the crowd. It was a strange cry in Judæa. "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" "Son of David!" All who heard it knew what it meant: and many amongst them must have been offended. They rebuked the blind men, and charged them to hold their peace. One of them was a well-known beggar, blind Bartimeus; but he was the loudest in his petition, crying out a great deal the more in spite of their displeasure, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still, and called the blind men to him, having compassion on them; and they, receiving their sight, followed him up the steep ascent to Bethany, glorifying God.

It was probably Friday when Jesus entered Bethany; and one quiet Sabbath day he spent there with his friends, Lazarus and his sisters. No doubt they had been forewarned of his arrival, and Martha, as once before, had been cumbered with household cares in his honor. For they made him a feast, in the house of Simon, a leper who had been restored to health by the Lord; and Martha served at this supper. It was only a few weeks since Lazarus had been called back from the grave; and this was the first opportunity they had had of giving him public honor and thanksgiving. The Sabbath was always a day of feasting and rejoicing among the Jews; and no doubt a large company was invited on this occasion—so large, perhaps, that Simon's house was chosen as being more commodious than their own. It is specially noticed that Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus; and that much people of the Jews knew that the Lord was there, and came out to see not him only, but Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Mary, wishful to show her love and devotion as well as Martha, who was waiting upon their Master, and counting nothing too costly to be spent for such a purpose, brought an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and breaking the box, anointed both his head and his feet with it, caring not to save a drop of the rare perfume for any other use. The fragrance of it filled the whole house where they were assembled. Some of the disciples, specially Judas Iscariot, felt indignant at this extravagance. For they were poor men, unaccustomed to luxury, and naturally intolerant of expensive whims, such as this act of Mary's seemed to them.

"Why was this waste of ointment made?" they asked. Judas calculated how much it was worth, and said it might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor. These murmurs troubled Mary, who had thought of nothing but how she could best show her love to the

Master. "Let her alone," said Jesus; "against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always." They were mournful words for Mary to hear. Was she indeed anointing her Lord beforehand, as if already death had laid its hand secretly upon him? Was it for this she had saved her precious ointment? She had kept it carefully to be used on some rare occasion, and now that she had poured it all without stint upon his head and feet, he said it was for his burial! But to take away if possible the sting of his sad words, Jesus said tenderly, "Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this shall be told as a memorial of her."

This feast, given so publicly to Jesus, aroused the anger of the chief priests against Lazarus. The miracle had been so manifest, and so difficult, if not impossible, to gainsay, that by reason of him many of the people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus. That Lazarus also must be put to death was the decision arrived at by the chief priests; though the Pharisees do not seem to have had anything to do with this resolve. He was too well known at Jerusalem for him to be left as a witness to the miraculous powers of Jesus of Nazareth.



# BOOK III. VICTIM AND VICTOR.

# CHAPTER 1.

The Son of David.

HE pilgrims who had left Jesus at Bethany, and gone on to Jerusalem, carried with them the news of his arrival, and excited considerable interest in the city. On the next day many people, hearing that he was on the road from Bethany, went out to meet him, and as they passed through the cool groves and gardens of Olivet, they plucked branches of palms and olives, and wove them together as they climbed the hill. Soon they saw him coming round the brow of the mountain along the road thronged by the bands of pilgrims,

amongst a crowd of them, though easily discerned, as he was no longer on foot, but riding on the colt of an ass, upon which the disciples had cast their garments. At the sight of him they broke into a shout, which might readily have been heard in the temple courts. They shouted "Hosanna!" and the cry was taken up by the crowd surrounding Jesus, and echoed far in the clear atmosphere. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The road was quickly strewn with mats of palm branches, and with the garments of the excited throng. The disciples, hearing the shout of the Messiah, the battle-cry of the nation, must have felt that at last the kingdom was truly nigh at hand, and that their Master was about to take to himself his throne and sceptre, and to fulfil his promise to them that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

But neither joy nor triumph was seen on the face of Jesus. As they wound slowly round the mount, a sudden turn of the road brought them in

sight of Jerusalem, with its palaces and temple in all their glory of marble and gold. It was a city worthy of being the capital of a great nation, beautiful for situation, the perfection of beauty in Jewish eyes; but when he beheld it thus lying before him, he wept over it. He foresaw the Roman legions casting a trench about it, besieging it straitly, and leaving not one stone upon another, and the day of salvation was passed, the things which belonged to its peace were now hidden. His mother, and those nearest him, heard the lamentation he uttered, and saw his tears falling, but the great crowd swept on, shouting and singing, down into the valey, and up again to the gate of Jerusalem.

All the city was by this time in a stir, asking, "Wb is this?" The Galileans, proud of their prophet, were the most eagr in their reply. "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee," the answered, as the procession threaded the narrow streets, and thousands of eople gazed down upon it from the house-tops, whilst the question ran alog from house to house, "Who is this that cometh?" No marvel that she'tly afterwards we find Greeks going to Philip, and saying to him, "Sir, wwould see Jesus."

Soon the temple courts were flooded by the crowd. Te children, always difficult to silence, did not cease to shout for any drea of the priests, or awe of the sacred place. They continued to cry, "Hosana to the Son of David!" Some of the Pharisees had asked him to rebke his disciples on their way from Bethany, but now the powerful chief prsts and scribes of the temple came to him in sore displeasure. "Heart thou what these say?" they asked. "Yea," answered Christ, "have ye ever read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected pise?" He would neither forbid them, nor refuse to receive the title of So of David, that cry which displeased his enemies so greatly. But as eveng was near, and it was not safe for him to stay in the city during the night he left the temple and returned to Bethany.

Probably, to avoid a repetition of these excitingoccurrences, Jesus returned to the city very early the next morning. Hhad never omitted any opportunity of warning his disciples against hyposy; and this day, by a singular and symbolic act, he impressed his lesso on their memory. Being hungry on the way, and seeing a fig-tree in leashe turned aside to see if there were figs upon it; for the fruit of this tree eccedes the opening of the leaf. There was nothing but leaves only—a fithblem of the nation which, alone among all nations, professed the service the one true God.



"Let no fruit grow upon thee from henceforth forever!" he cried; and the next time they passed by, the disciples saw the fig-tree withered away.

Upon reaching the temple, once again he drove out the merchants and money-changers from the outer court. He had done this the last time he had come to the passover, two years before, saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Now, in bolder language, he told them that they were naking it a den of thieves. By the time the court was cleared, it was known throughout the city that Jesus was in the temple, and the blind and the lame came to him to be healed in the sight of those deadly foes who represented him as an impostor. It was in vain they sought to seize him. The nultitudes ever about him made it impossible to take him openly and by day. The chief priests were as much baffled as the less powerful Pharises, for an uproar in the temple would inevitably bring down the Romai garrison dwelling in the tower of Antonia close by. At night they did not know where to find him; and soon it became plain that they must seek for a traitor among his most trusted followers.

The next day (Tuesday) Jesus again appeared very early in the temple: the people also hatened thither, eager and very attentive to hear him. He began to teach then, but he was soon interrupted by a party from the Great Sanhedrim, the highest legal and religious court of the nation, demanding by what authority he did such things, and who gave him this authority. Jesus replied, "I will also ask you a question. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" It was their special province to decide such a matter, but they dared not answer according to their judgment, for they feared the people, who held John as a prophet. When they said, "We cannot tell," Jesus declined to answer their question concerning his authority. But in their hearing he uttered the terrible parable of the wicked husbandman, and the parable of the marriage of the king's son. They knew that he spoke of them, and their enmity grew, if possible, more vehement. they stayed to listen no longer. They could not cope with such a speaker: his wisdom and skill in weaving parables turned the scale against them. The mass of the people might not catch the deeper meaning of his words, but there were many there who could not fail to see how keenly they were driven home against him.

The Pharisees, upon this discomfiture of the Sanhedrim, took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. They sent some spies, feigning themselves to be honest, anxious-minded men, troubled with a scruple of conscience. Ought they to pay tribute to the Roman emperor? Jesus,

who cared for no man, but taught the way of God truly, should decide for them. It was a clever, cunning question. Many really devout Jews were not easy in their minds about this paying of taxes to a foreign power. The Galileans especially, among whom were his supporters, had risen again and again in rebellion on this very point. The kinsmen of those Galileans who had perished in these insurrections were at that moment among his hearers, ready to take fire at any judgment adverse to their martyred friends. The disciples themselves must have been listening eagerly for his reply. All, except Judas Iscariot, belonged to Galilee; and one of them, Simon the Zealot, appears to have once belonged to a fierce and cruel party, sworn both to slay and to die in defence of the law. Was it lawful to pay tribute to a foreign king?

Jesus himself was in a singular position. He had permitted the Galileans to carry him in triumph into Jerusalem, amid the significant shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" He had spent two long days openly in the temple, teaching and working miracles in the face of his powerful enemies, who appeared paralyzed in their efforts to check or arrest him. His followers could not fail to see in these things that at last he claimed the Messiahship. Had he then resolved to gird his sword upon his thigh, and ride forth prosperously, with sharp arrows in the hearts of his adversaries? Was that right hand, which had been laid upon so many sufferers with a tender touch, about to learn terrible things? They dared not yet answer "Yes" to these questions, but they longed to do so. Yet the escape every evening from the city and their Master's solemn prophecies answered "No." Now he was asked, in the presence of foes, friends, and followers, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?"

His reply disappointed them all, and served to diminish his popularity, though not to any dangerous extent. No uproar followed it. He bade them bring to him the tribute money, and they showed him a Roman coin, which was in common use in the country; a sign of their subjection to a foreign power. This subjection had been permitted by their king, Jehovah, who was still ruling them, as well as all the nations upon earth. If they had been more careful to render unto God the things that were God's, they might not now have to pay tribute to Cæsar. It had become their duty to render unto Cæsar the things that belonged to Cæsar.

There was nothing in this answer which could be made a ground of complaint to Pilate. The Pharisees and Herodians found themselves baffled. But now the courtly and polished Sadducees came forward, seeking to put into an absurd light the doctrine of the resurrection, one of the points upon which he most insisted. Very likely Lazarus was standing near Jesus, the object of much interest and curiosity. The Sadducees, with the tact of men of the world, knew that nothing damages a cause as ridicule does. Jesus answered them solemnly, unveiling a little the mystery that enshrouds the state of the dead. They can die no more, neither marry. But they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God. Then referring them to their own Scriptures, and their lawgiver, Moses, whose authority they were bound to receive, he pointed out that when God spoke to him from the burning bush, he said, "I am the God of Abraham." "He is not a God of the dead," added Jesus, "but of the living: for all live unto him." The multitude were astonished at this answer; and certain of the scribes, who were standing by, whose lives had been spent in poring over the sacred books, cried out, "Master, thou hast well said!"

The Pharisees enjoyed hearing the Sadducees thus silenced; and one of them, a scribe, thought this a good opportunity for asking Jesus a question vehemently disputed among them: which was the chief commandment? "All the law and the prophets hang on two commandments," replied Jesus, "and these two are alike. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" The scribe listened to this answer with the approval of an honest man; and the Lord said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

It is probable that it was on this day that a party of Pharisees dragged before him in the temple a miserable woman, detected in adultery. They set her in the midst, and called upon him to pass judgment on her. The law of Moses commanded that she should be stoned; but this law had fallen into complete disuse, and to revive it would shock the whole nation. Yet if he, as a prophet, set himself against Moses, they would have some ground for accusing him. He seems to have been filled with shame at the way this case was brought before him; and stooping down, he wrote with his finger upon the ground, giving no answer until they continued asking him. Then, lifting up himself for a moment, he said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The hardened consciences of these men, even of the eldest, convicted them so poignantly of sin, that they stole away one by one, leaving the unhappy woman alone with him. When in the silence he lifted up himself a second time, he said to her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No

man, Lord," she answered. "Neither do I condemn thee," he added, "go and sin no more."

This was the last effort of his enemies to tempt him; and they durst ask him no more questions. Jesus, some time during this day, put a question to them, which must have made his followers' hearts beat high. "What think ye of Christ?" he asked. "Whose Son is he?" An extraordinary question! He knew very well that by all, except a few, he was looked upon as the Son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. His question drew attention to one of the most striking flaws in his own claim to the title of Messiah. "The Son of David," answered the Pharisees promptly. Surely Mary, and those who knew the mystery of his birth, now expect him to proclaim it. Simeon and Anna were dead; but there might still be persons about the temple, who would bear testimony to their prophecies when the child Jesus was brought to be presented to the Lord. But no; this was not the point Jesus had in view. He showed the scribes how David in the spirit called Christ his Lord, and intimated that there was some meaning in the words which they had not fathomed. He said no more; and they could not answer him; but the common people heard him gladly.

At length, moved to the utmost indignation against the Pharisees, who, as the most religious class, ruled over and deceived the nation, he broke out into a vehement and unrestrained rebuke of their hypocrisy in the hearing of all the people. It was in the temple itself; and the day was far spent. Presently he was about to quit it, to seek shelter and safety out of the city, and he was never again to visit his Father's house. He rebuked them passionately, and ended his protest by lamenting once more over Jerusalem. "Behold, your house"—no longer calling it his Father's house—"is left unto you desolate! For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

And now Jesus departed from the temple, never more to tread its courts. As he went out, his disciples, who were all amazed at hearing him say that house should be made desolate, pointed out to him the goodly stones and gifts, and enormously strong masonry of the walls. It was, in fact, a fortress all but impregnable; the defence of the city on the eastern side, where it stood on the brow of a precipitous rock. The stones of which the fortifications were built were of an extraordinary size. "Look, Master," they cried, "what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" "Seest thou these great buildings?" he answered, mournfully, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be cast down."

# CHAPTER II.

# The Traitor.

UITTING the city, Jesus went up the slope of the Mount of Olives, and sat down there over against the temple, looking across upon its marble walls and golden pinnacles. It was evening, and the setting sun touched it with level rays, whilst the valley beneath lay in deep shadow and gloom. It seems as if he could not turn away from it, though he had left it forever. It was now a den of thieves, the house of hypocrisy, not his Father's house. The disciples sat apart from him, distressed and discouraged. It had been altogether an agitating day. Their Master had had opportunities again and again of proclaiming his Messiahship, and had neglected or avoided them. His last vehement denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees had probably given as much offence to the people of Judæa as his answer about the tribute money had done to the Galileans. He seemed bent upon alienating his followers, and upon thrusting back the greatness offered to him.

At length Peter and Andrew, with James and John, came to him privately to ask when these things that he had spoken of should come to pass. He spoke to them in terms so clear of the immediate future that they could no longer hope to see him ascend an earthly throne, such as they had been dreaming of. He foretold sorrows such as had not been from the beginning of the creation. But he distinctly declared himself to be that Judge and King before whom all nations should be finally gathered for judgment and for separation. As he finished his long and sorrowful discourse, he said to these four favorite disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

This was probably the first word they had heard of treachery, and it could not but have shocked and troubled them greatly. Who among his friends, those who were trusted with the secret of his hiding-places, could be base enough to turn traitor? It was a terrible thought. A spy was among them who was about to betray their Lord. Who could it be? Hastily they would run over the list of his nearest and most trusted followers, but they could not fix upon any one. Yet from that moment there was no rest for them from suspicion and dread of the unknown betrayer, from whom their Master could not be secured.

The next day, Wednesday, and most of Thursday, seems to have been a time of rest and peaceful retirement for Jesus. Probably he passed the hours chiefly with his disciples and his mother, in quiet conversation, or in silent thought, concerning all he had done and taught, and all they were to do when he was gone. Somewhere on the Mount of Olives, perhaps in the house of Lazarus, the solemn hours glided by, neither wholly sorrowful, nor wholly glad. Their Lord was still with them, and it was hard to believe that days of mourning were about to dawn. They could not see the coming sorrow, whilst their eyes still caught the light of his tender smile. They could not hear the murmur of the gathering storm, whilst they were listening to his gracious words. A happy, sorrowful, solemn time, such as never was so spent on earth, before or since. His loved ones were around him, those whom his Father had given to him, and none of them were lost, save one.

That lost one was not with them the whole of the day. Judas, the pursabearer, had business to do in Jerusalem; so he left the friends and the Master, with whom he had ate and drunk, and wandered to and fro for twelve months, knowing them more intimately than many a man knows his brothers. He was weary of it all, and yesterday he had seen every vision of wealth fade away into a too certain prospect of persecution as a follower of the Prophet of Nazareth. The purse at his side felt empty; it would always be empty, unless he took care to fill it for himself. Probably, on his way to the city, he had to pass by a field he had set his mind on, and which he had perhaps partly purchased. It was not his yet, and it did not seem likely it would ever become his whilst he served his present Master. He entered Jerusalem with his mind made up. He knew one way by which he could get money to buy that field.

A council of the Great Sanhedrim was being held in the palace of the high-priest. The important question laid before the seventy-one chief men of the nation was how Jesus might be taken by craft and killed. Not on the feast day, lest there should be an uproar among the people; it must be done by subtlety, in the absence of the multitude. But when was Jesus alone? Where did he conceal himself when he left the city at nightfall? There were thousands of tents and booths erected round the city by the pilgrims, who could find no lodging-place within the walls; and it would be impossible to find him. They needed some one to betray him.

This need was met in Judas. They had not even to seek him, for he same voluntarily to bargain with them how much they should give him

for delivering his Master to them. They were glad, and promised to give him thirty pieces of silver, to be paid when they had their prey in their hands. Possibly Judas felt in a measure justified by his knowledge of the miraculous powers of Christ, if he only chose to use them for escaping from his enemies, or even for destroying them? He, who could call Lazarus from the dead, had but to speak the word, and no foe could stand before him. And if Jesus were bent upon death, it was but prudent to secure himself, and make some provision for the dreary future, in place of that which he had forsaken to follow him.

Did Judas go back in the fall of the evening to the tranquil company on Olivet, and take his place among them, with a smile upon his face, and news from the city on his lips? Did he sit down with them to their simple, homely supper, listening to catch up what arrangements had been made for the night; where his Master should sleep, and who would be nearest to him within hearing? Did he see the worn, anxious face of Mary, smiling only when she met the eyes of her Son, who had lived with her so many peaceful years under their lowly roof at Nazareth? Did he join in the evening hymn sung before they separated for the night, the last they would thus spend together? We must suppose that he did something like this; that he was still their comrade and fellow-apostle, Judas; and that none guessed the business that had taken him to Jerusalem, nor the bargain he had made there.

# CHAPTER III.

# The Paschal Supper.

ALL the next day Judas was seeking a convenient opportunity to betray Christ. He soon discovered that it was his Master's purpose to eat the Paschal supper in Jerusalem; for there, and there only, could it be eaten. No doubt Mary, with that band of timid and faithful women, now gathered about him, would urge him to forego his determination, so great was the danger of venturing into the city and passing a night there. But with a strong desire had he desired to eat that passover with his disciples; the first and only one they could celebrate with him. He called Peter and John to him, and bade them go and prepare the passover. At last, then, Judas was satisfied that he would be caught in the double snare of the city and the feast.

It was the day on which the passover must be killed. At noon all work was laid aside, and all leaven destroyed, unleavened bread alone being lawful food for the next eight days. In the temple the evening sacrifice was offered an hour earlier than on other days, for the number of passover lambs to be slain before nightfall was immense. During this week the whole company of the priests was on duty; and the courts of the temple were crowded with the multitudes of Jews who had come up to the city to keep the passover, and brought their lambs to slay for the Paschal supper, which had to be eaten that night; the first day of the passover beginning as soon as the stars became visible in the sky.

Peter and John, not Judas the purse-bearer, had been sent by Jesus to prepare the feast. They had to choose and buy a suitable lamb, carry it up to the temple, and see that it was roasted for supper. They had asked where they were to prepare it. Their Master had friends in Jerusalem, but some prudence was needed in the choice of the house where he would celebrate the feast. He probably chose the house of some old friend, where, perhaps, he had in former times eaten many a joyous passover with his mother and cousins; for in solemn hours we choose rather to be in familiar places than strange ones. "The good man of the house," he said, "will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready."

On this day the evening sacrifice was offered about half-past two, immediately after which the slaying of the passover began. Probably the disciples were in the first division of those who brought their lambs; for at the fall of evening, as soon as the stars shone in the sky, the feast was ready. Christ had been lingering on Olivet, where the hymns and hallelujahs from the temple might reach his ear, with the blast of the silver trumpets which told that the Paschal lamb was slain. But as the evening drew on, he descended the mount with his disciples, and entered the city unobserved in the twilight. Most likely Judas did not know till then at what house the passover was to be eaten, and he had not yet found the convenient season he was seeking.

The preoccupation of the people freed the little group of men from observation, as well as the twilight which was darkening the streets. Every Jew must eat the passover that night, in his best and festive garments. Many of those who had been latest in the temple were hurrying homewards with the lamb that had yet to be roasted for the supper. All of them were too much engrossed in the celebration of the feast to give more than a passing thought to the band of Galileans, but dimly seen, who were

following the prophet of Nazareth through the streets. None were with him save the twelve apostles. Lazarus, whom he had called from the dead, Mary, his mother; his kinsmen from Nazareth were not there. In some other guest-chamber, under another roof, they would keep the feast that night; they had seen him for the last time, until they saw him again next morning on the way to Calvary.

It was still early in the evening when they reached the large upper chamber, where the feast was prepared for them. It was enjoined that the Paschal supper should not be eaten standing, as slaves eat their food; but that all, even the poorest, must sit down leaning, as free men, who have time to feast. Again, four cups of wine must be drunk, though money must be had out of the poor-box for its purchase. No one was allowed to eat after the evening sacrifice until this meal was ready, that all might come to it with a hearty appetite. It was a festival for gladness; a solemn day of joy; and hymns of praises were to be sung.

Jesus was the head of this company, and he took the first cup of wine into his hand, and gave thanks over it; then passing it to his disciples, he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." This was the beginning of the feast. After it, all were enjoined to wash their hands, before the Paschal meal of bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and the passover lamb was eaten. It was now that the Lord rose from the supper, and laid aside the white festive robe he was wearing, and pouring water into a basin, washed and wiped the feet of his disciples. There had been a strife amongst them again as to which should be the greatest; or, probably, which should have the chief places at the table. see him rise, and thus minister to them, filled them with shame; but Peter alone ventured to protest against it. "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" he cried, impulsively. But when Christ said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," he prayed, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," answered Jesus; "and ye are clean, but not all." It was the first word of heaviness at the thought of the traitor, whose feet he had washed with the Sitting down again to the table, he bade them do as he had done to them, and remember that the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. "I speak not of you all," he added: "I know whom I have chosen. The scripture must be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

This heart-heaviness deepened as the feast went on; the voice of Judas mingling in the hymns of praise—for he dared not be silent—must have jarred upon the ear of Jesus. He broke one of the cakes of unleavened bread, and distributed it, with the bitter herbs, to his disciples, saying plainly to them, "One of you shall betray me." At last, then, they knew that the traitor was amongst the twelve. This filled them with surprise and exceeding sorrow; and they not only began to inquire among themselves who it should be, but every one of them, even Judas, said to him, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus was himself greatly troubled in spirit, and the joyousness which should have marked the feast fled, and was succeeded by a heavy gloom. The youngest of the disciples, John, was reclining next to his beloved Master, near enough to whisper to him unheard by the others. Peter beckoned to him to ask who the traitor was, and Jesus said, "He to whom I shall give this sop, when I have dipped it." He was then dipping portions of the unleavened cake into a preparation of raisins and dates. mixed with vinegar, and distributing them to the apostles. He gave it to Judas, who just then was asking him, "Master, is it I?" nothing in the action to call attention to the guilty man; but John knew certainly, and Peter guessed, that it was he who was about to betray his Lord.

The supper was only just beginning; and Judas considered the present opportunity to be too good to be lost, even though he should miss the Paschal meal. Jesus was within the walls of the city, with none but his little band of apostles around him. Moreover, he now felt sure that his treachery was suspected, if not known; and he must succeed at once, if he wished to succeed at all. He rose from the table whilst they were still in excitement as to who was the traitor among them. Such a movement, so suspicious and unaccountable, must have increased their excitement, and probably have caused an attempt at interfering with him, if Jesus had not said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly." They supposed something had been forgotten that was necessary for the feast, or that there was some poor person who depended upon their assistance to celebrate it; and that Judas would return in time to partake of the Paschal lamb. "Do it quickly," Jesus said. No doubt the guilty and miserable man hurried along the streets, now dark, but with the ringing notes of the hallelujah sounding from every house as he passed by, the only Jew in the city who did not eat the passover that night.

The moment the traitor was gone, Jesus recovered his serene composure.

He spoke to his disciples tenderly; though when Peter boasted that he would lay down his life for him, he forewarned him that he would that very night deny him thrice. The supper was almost over, the lamb was eaten, when Jesus, taking into his hands the third cup of wine, called the cup of blessing, said, "Drink ye all of it. This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." He did not partake of it himself, and he repeated what he had said at the beginning of the feast, that he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until they drank it with him in his Father's kingdom.

He then addressed to them words of surpassing tenderness, beginning with, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Thomas put in a doubtful question; Philip, who had been so long with him, asked him to show to them the Father of whom he spoke; and Judas, his cousin, once more inquired why he did not manifest himself to the world; but for each he had only a gentle reproof that could not grieve them. He promised them all a Comforter, who should never leave them, as he was leaving them. There was not now much time for him to talk with them. The prince of this world was coming. "Arise," he said, as though he would not have Judas find him lingering in the guest chamber; "let us go hence."

But still, as though reluctant to break up that loving circle, he lingered amongst them, to speak more comforting words, calling them no longer his disciples, but his friends. Possibly he shrank from quitting that quiet upper room for the scene of the mysterious agony that was coming. His work was almost finished; there was nothing for him now to do, save to suffer. No more blind eyes would he open; no more deaf ears unstop. The leper would not come to him for cleansing, nor the lame and palsystricken crowd about him to be healed. Neither would he teach any more by parables. The next crowd of faces surrounding him would not be those of eager listeners or faithful friends. How bitter the next few hours would be, he knew already. He lifted up his eyes and prayed; yet not for himself, but for those whom his Father had given him out of the world.

The last cup of the passover was now taken by the disciples, and the last hymn sung. Then they went down into the streets, echoing with the songs of those who kept the feast. The full moon flooded them with light; and the little company, feeling safer perhaps as they left the city walls behind them, crossed the brook Kedron, and passed on into the garden of

Gethsemane, where their Master was wont to lead them often. They were on Olivet again, near their places of refuge; and their hearts were lighter than whilst they were in the city. There was not much danger here.

# CHAPTER IV.

# Gethsemane.

BUT what had hindered Judas all this time? Jesus had not hastened from the guest-chamber to escape from his treachery. It was no great distance to the high-priest's palace, or to the temple, where there were guards on duty. But all were occupied in celebrating the passover, and none could sit down to it earlier than the Lord seems to have done. They must keep the feast first; the murder must be committed afterwards.

As soon, however, as the feast was over, the temple guards hurried to their task. Possibly Judas may have discovered before they started that Jesus had left the city already, and it became necessary to procure a detachment of Roman soldiers from the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple. The plea that they were about to arrest a dangerous leader, popular with the multitude, who must be taken by night, readily secured their aid. As the soldiers and the temple guard passed through the streets, a number of fanatical Pharisees, armed with swords and staves, joined them; a few even of the chief priests and elders were there. Judas probably counselled them to carry also torches and lanterns; for, though the moon was at the full, there were dark and gloomy shades in the garden, where Jesus might escape from their search.

In the meanwhile Jesus, having left most of his disciples in the open part of the garden, had taken with him Peter, and James, and John, and withdrawn into the more distant and darker glades, as Judas had foreseen. "Tarry ye here," he said to his favorite friends, "whilst I go and pray yonder." It was no solitary mountain by the lake of Galilee, such as had been his place of prayer the last passover night. But he must be alone; no one must be too near to him in that hour of agony. A mysterious anguish, a sorrow like no other sorrow, was crushing him down. A degrading and painful doom was at hand; but first his soul must be poured out unto death. He had been despised and rejected of men: but now he was to be bruised for the iniquities of the world, wounded for its transgressions, put to grief

by God. Even he began to be sore amazed at the profound gloom spreading over his soul. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," he said to his disciples.

Withdrawing from them about a stone's cast, he fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, this hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he cried, "all things are possible to thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." But, restless in his great anguish, Jesus returned to his three friends, whom he had left sitting under the trees, and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch with me one hour?" Then he added gently, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Back into the solitude and gloom he went again to suffer alone the unutterable agony. None could help him to bear that burden. He prayed more earnestly. "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Then, returning to seek some sympathy with his disciples, he found them again asleep, and they knew not what to say, except that their eyes were heavy. Now utterly alone, conscious that these, his dearest friends, could take no part in his sorrow, he went away the third time, and prayed, saying the same words. At last one angel, one alone of all the heavenly host that sang at his birth, appeared to him, strengthening him to endure that anguish worse than death.

Strong enough now to meet the bitter end, Jesus came the last time to his sleeping disciples. Waking them, he said, "The hour is come. Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." Even as he spoke, before they had time to shake off their drowsiness and bewilderment, they heard the tramp of many feet coming near, and saw the glimmering of torches among the trees. Jesus went forward to meet the band of soldiers, asking, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. "I am he," he said, calmly. was something in his manner which so overawed them that they shrank back from him, and recoiling upon the crowd that pressed behind, cast some of them to the ground. But as they recovered themselves Judas came to the front, and too familiar to be swayed as they had been by the hidden majesty and the sacred dignity of great sorrow in his Lord, he stepped forth and kissed him, saying, "Master, Master!" It was the sign he had given to those who were come to arrest Jesus. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast, and take him away safely." "Judas," asked his Master, marvelling at the depth of his villany, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"



"They went backward, and fell to the ground."-JOHN XVIII. 6.

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Still the temple guards hesitated to seize him. They had heard histeachings, and seen his miracles in the temple, and possibly they were afraid lest he should work by his miraculous power against them. was something terrible about a man who could make the dead obey, or could convey himself away unseen amid a throng of foes. They were reluctant to lay hands upon Jesus, though the traitor, who had kissed him, still stood before them unhurt. "Whom seek ye?" he asked, again. "Jesus of Nazareth," they repeated. "I have told ye that I am he," he answered; "if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." His three disciples were probably hemmed in by the multitude, and the rest were looking on, terrified, from behind. Peter, with reckless desperation, drew a sword, and striking wildly, smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off Jesus rebuked him, and healed the man; his last miracle, wrought upon an enemy at the moment he was betrayed into their hands. He was yet free to do good: but now the captain and the temple guard laid hold of him and bound him. "Are ye come out as against a thief?" he asked, indignantly, yet patiently. "I was daily with you in the temple, and ve took me not. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Seeing that he suffered himself to be bound, and that no legion of angels came to deliver him, all the disciples, even Peter, even John, forsook him, and fled. None of his twelve apostles remained near to him but Judas.

Scattered were the disciples, every man fleeing where his fears led him. Some, perhaps, sought a secret and safe retreat among the farmhouses on Olivet; some returned to the city tremblingly, to convey the bitter news to the other friends of Christ. Mary, his mother, with her sister, and many other women from Galilee, were lodging in Jerusalem during the feast, and would quickly hear what had come to pass. His cousins, who had been so long in believing on him; his secret disciples, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; all must have felt that no common danger, no slight catastrophe, was at hand. There was one hope still in his favor. The Jews had not the power to put him to death legally; and even if they had. their traditions laid it down as a law, that whenever a criminal was condemned to die, he should not be executed on the same day as that when the verdict was passed, and that the judgment should be reconsidered by the great Sanhedrim on the day following. Jesus could not in any case be put to death before the first day of the week: and in the mean time heaven and earth must be moved to deliver him out of the hands of his adversaries. He had a powerful party in his favor; and it was never difficult to stir up

a popular agitation during the feasts. The dark hours of the night passed by too rapidly as they consulted together concerning what must be done.

# CHAPTER V.

# The High-Priest's Palace.

A LONE, save for Judas, bound, followed by a rabble of scoffing partisans of the chief priests and elders, Jesus was led away from the garden of Gethsemane. The guards took him first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high-priest, a haughty and powerful man. The chief offices of the temple were filled by members of his family, who were all Sadducees, and had not been vehemently opposed to Christ until his influence with the people began to threaten their own, and to endanger the revenues of the temple, from which they drew their wealth. Annas, who was an old man, probably did not trouble himself to see the prisoner at that hour of the night, but sent him on to the palace of Caiaphas, the high-priest, where the Great Sanhedrim would assemble as soon as they could be summoned from their various homes.

By this time Peter and John had fallen in with one another; and recovering somewhat from the panic that had seized them, they followed their Master to the high-priest's house. John knew Caiaphas so well as to find easy admittance into his palace, and he went in with Jesus, as near to him as he could get, that he might see that his beloved disciple had not altogether forsaken him. But Peter had been unable to get in, and after a while John went and spoke for him to the woman who kept the door, and brought him into the open court of the palace.

The chief priests and elders, who had gone out to Gethsemane with the officers and soldiers, now formed themselves into a preliminary council to examine Jesus, before the Great Sanhedrim could meet. Caiaphas was at the head of it, and asked him of his disciples and doctrine. As to his disciples Jesus said nothing, but about his doctrine he answered, "I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me." Most of those who were present had heard him in the temple; the guards had once said, "Never man spake like this man." But now one of them struck him for answering

the high-priest so. It was yet an hour or two before daybreak, at which time the Sanhedrim was to assemble, and it would seem that Caiaphas at this time left Christ to the wicked cruelties of his servants. Probably they led him from the hall, where this brief examination had taken place, into the open court, when they blindfolded him, and striking him on the face, cried mockingly, "Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?" Other insults they heaped upon him, with the rude brutality of men who knew that they should not offend their masters by such misconduct.

It was a chilly night, and the servants had kindled a fire in the court, Peter standing with them to warm himself. Before his Master was brought out to be mocked and insulted, one of the maids of the high-priest, looking at him, said, "Thou also wert with Jesus of Nazareth." He was instantly and naturally filled with fear, and denied it at once, saying, "I do not understand what thou sayest. I am not one of his disciples." He felt it to be wisest to withdraw from the circle round the fire, and retreated into the darkness of the porch. It was already drawing near to daybreak, for a cock crew as he stood in the gateway. Then the woman who kept the door asked him again, "Art thou not one of this man's disciples?" "I am not," he replied shortly. Once more feeling nowhere safe, yet reluctant to quit the palace, he returned into the court, where, it may be, his Lord was now standing, bearing in silence the cruelties of the servants. A kinsman of Malchus, whose ear he had cut off in Gethsemane, soon asked him, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" They that stood by said confidently, "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrayeth thee." Then Peter began to curse and to swear, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." His Lord, who heard his oaths, turned, and looked upon him, and he remembered the word he had spoken, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." He had not believed himself so cowardly and disloyal. Even now he dared not stand forth and own himself a disciple of the mocked and despised prophet of Nazareth; but creeping away from the palace, with that last look of his Master haunting him, he went out into the dawning of the day, and wept bitterly. Worse than the insults of the servants must have been the vehement denials of his disciple, and Peter could not fail to remember the awful saying, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

By daybreak the Sanhedrim were assembled, and Jesus was brought

before them. They had all been seeking witnesses against him, but none could be found whose witness agreed. It was necessary that at least two should agree. After a while there came forward two men, one of whom testified he had heard him say, "I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." The accusation took a more doubtful form with the other witness, "I am able to destroy this temple of God, and to build it in three days." Even this testimony did not agree sufficiently. Neither the high-priest, nor the Sanhedrim, eager as they were to convict him, could be satisfied to do so on such paltry evidence. Jesus was standing before them, questioning nothing, answering nothing; giving them no chance of fastening upon any indiscreet words. The scene altogether must have been unutterably painful to him, apart from his own position. The great religious body of the nation, the most learned in the law, the most irreproachable in character, the men presumed to be the wisest and best of the nation, were shamelessly seeking evidence by which they might condemn to death a prophet, of whom no man knew any evil.

At last Caiaphas stood up in the midst, in his office as high-priest, and adjured Christ by the living God to tell them whether he was the Messiah, the Son of God. "I am," he replied; "and ye shall see the Son of man on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." There was no further need of perjured witnesses. All had heard the awful words. Caiaphas rent his clothes, crying, "He hath spoken blasphemy! What think ye?" With one voice they all declared him to be worthy of death.

Jesus knew when he uttered these words that he was pronouncing his own sentence. Until that question was asked him he had been dumb, opening not his mouth. But the form in which the question was put left him no choice but to answer. The moment in which he most distinctly claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God, was the moment when such a claim was his death-knell. Until now he had left his works to speak for him.. Even with his disciples he had seldom insisted on being the Messiah; he had never held himself aloof from them in kingly state. With them he was the Son of man, their brother; before the Sanhedrim he called himself the Son of God, their Judge.

# CHAPTER VI.

# Pilate's Judgment Hall.

of them arose, and led Jesus away to Pilate's judgment-hall. It was early, and the city would hardly be astir after the feast last night. The friends of Jesus were still buoyed up with the thought that, at the earliest, the crime of his death could not be committed until after the Sabbath was ended. The haste of the Sanhedrim was not only indecent, but it was illegal, according to their own traditions. They had taken no time to reconsider their verdict. The judges had not fasted for a whole day, as they were bound to do after sentencing a man to death before he was led away to execution. The death of Christ was a judicial murder of the blackest dye.

But at the threshold of Pilate's judgment-hall a difficulty presented itself. If they entered it they would be defiled, and could not partake of the feast of that day. On this day the Chagigah was offered, which was strictly a peace-offering, and symbolized their unbroken and undimmed communion with God. A portion of the offering was burnt upon the altar, and a portion eaten as a feast in the temple itself, or, at least, within the walls of Jerusalem. Probably the Great Sanhedrim kept this feast in some stately chamber of the temple; for did not they stand nearer to God than any other of the people? But if they went into Pilate's judgment-hall with their prisoner they would be defiled, and rendered unfit for its celebration.

Pilate had had many a serious conflict with the Jews on subjects of their religion, which he despised and misunderstood; yet he now yielded so far as to go out to these wealthy and noble citizens. "What accusation bring ye against this man?" he asked. They did not wish to make any definite accusation, and they answered sharply, that if he had not been an evildoer, they would not have taken the trouble to deliver him up to him. "Take him yourselves," said Pilate, "and judge him according to your law." "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," they said.

No doubt Pilate knew already something of Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, who had entered the city in what appeared to him a mock triumph only five days before. This reply of the Sanhedrim showed him at once what they wanted. The prophet must be put to death, and he must bear

ne blame of it. But upon what grounds was he to crucify this man? The Sanhedrim were not at a loss, though they could say nothing here of the charge of blasphemy. "We found him," said these religious rulers of the country, "we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forkidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he is Christ, a King." All there must have known how Jesus had disappointed his followers by bidding them render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. Pilate returned to the judgment-hall, and looked upon the weary frame and worn face of him who all night long had been passing through agony after He still wore the festive robes in which he had eaten of the Paschal supper; but even these were only the clothing of a poor man, a man of the people, not those of any kingly pretender. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he asked. The Roman governor seems to have felt kindly towards him, as a harmless fanatic, whose vague language had brought him into danger. Jesus told him he had indeed a kingdom, but it was not of this world. True men alone could hear his voice. "What is truth?" asked Pilate, mockingly. He had not found it among the Romans; and certainly it did not exist among the Jews. He could not but suspect the whole charge against Jesus to be a skilfully-framed falsehood. But he was prepossessed in his favor, and more than willing to disappoint his accusers. He left Jesus, and went out again to the pavement, or terrace, before his palace. By this time a rabble of citizens had gathered, among whom the partisans of the Sanhedrim were scattered, artfully exciting them against Jesus, as one who had deceived the people and threatened to destroy the temple. Probably a small number of his friends were also among the crowd, bewildered and shocked to find their Master handed over to the Roman power. But when Pilate was seen all were still; a few in breathless hope, the many in silent hatred.

"I find in him no fault at all," said the governor. A thrill of great joy must have run through the heart of John, who had followed his Lord faithfully. But a fierce clamor began; and the chief priests would not suffer their accusation to fall to the ground.

"He stirreth up the people," they cried, "teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, even to this place."

Here was a loop-hole for Pilate to escape from his difficulty. If Jesus came from Galilee, he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction. Herod was come up to the passover; and Pilate would pay him a compliment by referring the case to him. They were not friends at this moment, probably because of

those Galileans whom Pilate had slain during one of the riots at some feast; but the Roman governor was anxious to be at peace with him. He therefore sent Jesus to Herod, who had for a long time wished to see the famous prophet of his own country, whose miracles were noised abroad so much. The priests and scribes violently accused him before Herod; but Jesus spoke not a word. He had never before seen the face of the man who had murdered John the Baptist in prison; and none of his questions would he answer, though he answered Pilate's. But even Herod dared not condemn him to death on charges so frivolous and false as those urged against him. He had already exasperated his people by John's assassination, and he could not venture to return to Galilee stained with the blood of Jesus. Yet he would not offend the Sanhedrim by releasing the prisoner; and he determined to send him again to Pilate. But to gratify his own paltry pique and disappointment, and to cast ridicule upon Christ, he arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and joined with his men of war in mocking him, before sending him back.

Pilate was troubled by the return of the prisoner and his accusers. He knew that the leading men of the nation were unfriendly to him. They had already succeeded in bringing him into difficulties with his emperor, and they were eager to have him disgraced and removed. Yet he shrank from the injustice of putting Jesus to death. There was one chance left in an appeal to the people, who had so lately assisted in his triumphal entry in Jerusalem. He called them together, with the chief priests and elders, and said, "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people, and, behold, I, having examined him, find no fault in him at all, concerning those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is found in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go."

It had of late years been the custom of the governor to allow the people at this feast to choose a prisoner, whom they would, who was immediately set free. There was a notorious man lying in prison at this time, guilty of robbery, sedition, and murder. The chief priests suggested to them that they should choose Barabbas. A loud uproar was made, all crying out at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." But Pilate, still willing to save Jesus, yet desirous to sneer at the accusations made by the Sanhedrim, asked them, "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" The taunt irritated the mob, and they shouted, "Crucify him; crucify him." "Why, what evil hath he done?" pleaded

Pilate. But they cried out the more exceedingly, with loud voices, "Crucify him."

Yet still Pilate seems to have had a lingering hope that the punishment of scourging, which was at once most painful and degrading, might satisfy their enmity. He delivered Christ to his soldiers, who platted a crown of thorns, and put a reed into his hand as a sceptre; he was still wearing the gorgeous robe in which Herod had sent him back to Pilate, and thus, after he had been scourged, he was brought forth for the mob to see him. "Behold the man," said Pilate. It was he whom they had seen healing the lame and blind in the temple, and to whom they had listened gladly not long ago; for it was amongst the poorest and most wretched of the people that his mighty works had been wrought. But at the sight of him a maddened yell arose, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" Their violence prevailed. But Pilate still shrank from taking upon himself the guilt of such a crime against justice. He had just received a message from his wife: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." He may not have been superstitious, but he felt it would be painful to return to her stained with the blood of an innocent man for whom she had interceded, with no other excuse than that the people of Jerusalem were too strong for him. "Take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him," he said.

This did not suit the priestly party at all. Their law did not permit of crucifixion, and they were bent upon this degrading punishment. Neither did they wish to incur the odium of bloodshed, though they did not shrink from the guilt of it. In their anxiety to urge Pilate on, they forgot for a moment their political charge against Jesus, and returned to their religious accusation. "He made himself the Son of God," they cried, "and by our law he ought to die." Upon this Pilate returned into the judgment-hall, and had Jesus brought again to him. "Whence art thou?" he asked. But he was silent; and Pilate, astonished and somewhat indignant at his silence, reminded him that he had power to release him or to crucify him. This was no longer true. He had lost his power by not exerting it at once. and he felt it. He could not let Jesus go now, without stirring up a riot of a desperate character in Jerusalem. Jesus answered him in words almost of sympathy, that he could have no power at all against him, unless it had been permitted; and that his sin was small compared with that of the Sanhedrim.

Again Pilate sought to release him. But the people cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." This cry at once sealed the doom of Christ. Pilate ordered his judgment-seat to be set on the pavement before the judgment-hall. When Jesus came forth again, he said, "Behold your King!" A wilder shout than ever rang in the ears of Christ: the shouts of those for whom he had spent his life. "What, shall I crucify your King?" asked Pilate. "We have no king but Cæsar," answered the chief priests.

Then fearing, and seeing that he could not prevail against fanatics who could utter such an answer, Pilate took water, and washed his hands before the multitude.

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person," he said; "see ye to it."
"His blood be on us, and on our children." answered all the people.

### CHAPTER VII.

### Calvary.

To time was lost between the passing of the verdict and the execution of it. The cross was ready; and two thieves were only waiting for this trial to close before they met their punishment. Calvary was not far from Pilate's palace; it was only just beyond the city walls, near the highway leading from one of the gates. Christ was in the hands of the Roman soldiers; but the chief priests and clders could not trust them to do their work unwatched. The cross was laid upon him, but he was too feeble and worn-out to bear it; and when he sank under it, the soldiers seized upon a man, coming in from the country, and him they compelled to carry the cross to Calvary. Whether the man was a disciple or not, we are not told: but no doubt there were many disciples by this time mingling with the crowd, who would willingly have borne the cross after Jesus. There were many women among the people, who bewailed and lamented him openly, daughters of Jerusalem, who had not turned against him as the fickle mob Possibly it was when he sank under the weight of his cross that their lamentation broke out most loudly; and Jesus turned to them, and said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." The fate of the guilty city was heavier to him than his cross.

was still early in the day; about the hour when the morning sacrifice was offered. He was nailed upon the cross; and as it was lifted and let fall into the hole prepared for it, a moment of extreme torture, he cried, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." After this was done, the four soldiers, whose duty it was to watch under the cross until the person upon it was dead, began their usual custom of dividing the clothing among them. A title also was brought to be put over the head of the criminal, giving his name and crime. Pilate had sent for the cross of Christ, written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, so that all should be able to read it, this title, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It irritated and offended the chief priests; but Pilate would not have it altered into "He said, I am the King of the Jews."

The haste with which the trial and the execution had been hurried on makes it probable that not many of the Galileans knew of the arrest of their prophet. Some of them possibly knew nothing of it until they heard that he was dead. But as the terrible tidings ran through the city, those who heard it would speed to Calvary with despair in their hearts, to find him whom they loved and trusted in hanging upon a cross between two thieves, with a circle of enemies around him, even of chief priests and elders, mocking at him and jibing him. The soldiers at the foot casting lots over that priestly robe of his, which his mother had woven without seam; and the title over his head, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews:" the unclouded sun, growing hotter and hotter every minute, shining down upon all the fearful scene, as it was shining on their own beloved lake and hills of Galilee.

John had been near him all the time. Now three women forced their way through the circle of mocking priests; Mary, his mother, Mary Cleophas, her sister, and Mary of Magdalene. Other women from Galilee stood afar off, watching through the weary hours. Peter, perhaps, was somewhere on the outskirts of the crowd, seeing, though not daring to go near him, whom he had denied thrice. Possibly Judas himself was drawn thither, against his will, to look once more on him whom he had betrayed with a kiss.

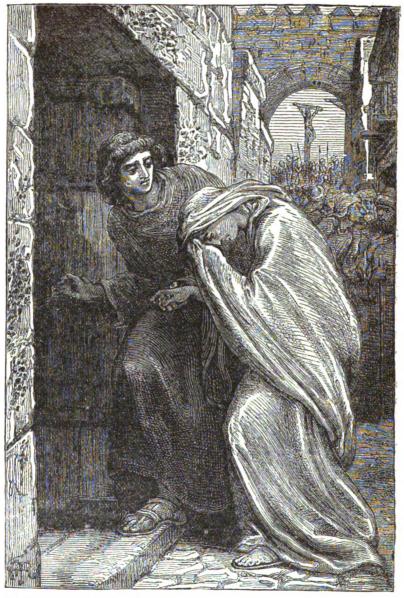
The sun shone hot and clear. When they brought Jesus to the place of, execution, they had offered to him a drugged draught, which was given to criminals to dull their sense of pain; but having tasted thereof, he would not drink. He could see, and hear, and feel as keenly as when he had been in his quiet home in Nazareth. The mocking faces of the chief priests; the unconcerned faces of the soldiers; the soul-strickened face of his mother;



"There were also women looking on afar off."—MARK XV. 40. 982

his eyes rested upon, as they looked up to him from below. His ears heard the jeering of the people as they went to and fro along the highway, reviling him, and saying, "Ah! thou that destroyest the temple!" Now and then the blast of the silver trumpets and the voice of song from the temple reached him. After a while the first pangs of bodily pain had dulled a little; and he could again show his compassion and tenderness for others. The thieves hanging, where James and John had wished to sit, the one on his right hand, the other on his left, had reviled him as well as his enemies. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us," they cried. But one of them, lifting up his dim eyes to the face of Christ, and to the title above his head, saw that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was suffering death with them. "Dost thou not fear God?" he cried to his fellow-thief, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews! There was one, even here, ready to own him King. "Lord," said the dying thief, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," answered Jesus. Before the sun, which was now beating upon the shameful crosses where they hung, had gone down into the western sea, both of them would be in Paradise! His mother heard him say it as she stood beneath his cross.

But Jesus knew his worst anguish was yet to come, worse than the pain he felt in his body, or the bitterness of the contempt poured upon him, and he would not have his mother witness it. She had borne much, and perhaps could not bear more, and live. We can well believe no other being on earth was so dear to him. None had shared his whole life as she had done; none could understand him, and his purpose, so well. Did he not remember their home in Nazareth, where the peaceful, monotonous days followed one another so quietly that she had almost forgotten whose son he was? All was over between them now: there was but one more duty for him to discharge: one more look for her to take of her son Jesus. John stood near to her: his youngest and best beloved disciple. Looking down upon them, with his matchless tenderness, he said to her, "Woman, behold thy son." "Behold thy mother!" he said to John. She looked up to him as his failing, loving voice fell upon her ear: and she understood him, and his love, better than she had ever done before. The look that passed between them was their farewell. John led her away from the cross to his own dwelling-place; and the last earthly care was gone from the heart of Jesus.



"And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home."—John xix. 27. 984

About noon a strange gloom spread over those skies, usually so blue and cloudless. There was darkness over all the land until the hour for the evening sacrifice. Probably the crowd melted away in fear of a coming tempest, or in dread of the inexplicable obscurity; and we do not find that the chief priests lingered longer on Calvary. An extraordinary anguish, a mysterious darkness, as of despair, filled the heart and mind of Christ. His soul, which in Gethsemane had been sorrowful even unto death, was now poured out unto death. He had borne the mockery of the people, had seen them stare upon him with cruel eyes, and heard their roaring against him. But now God seemed to hide his face from him, and to hearken no longer to his cry. This he could not bear; his heart was breaking under this sorrow. He cried with a loud voice, which rang mournfully through the darkness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There were still about the cross some Jews who could make jest of this awful cry. They knew Elias was to come to prepare the way for the Messiah, and they said, "Behold, he calleth Elias!" Jesus, whose last moment was at hand, and whose throat was parched, cried, "I thirst." One of them, touched with pity, ran and took a sponge, and, filling it with vinegar, lifted it to his mouth on a reed. But the rest cried, "Let him be; let us see whether Elias will come to save him, and to take him down."

It was now the hour of the evening sacrifice. Once again Christ was heard to say, "It is finished." Then with a loud voice, he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He bowed his head and died. He gave up his spirit, bruised and tormented, and poured out unto death, into his Father's hands.

### CHAPTER VIII.

### In the Grave.

A T the third hour, when Jesus was dying on Calvary, the priest was offering up incense in the holy place of the temple. All the congregation, and the sacrificing priest in the outer court, were waiting for him to reappear. Suddenly an earthquake shook both the temple mount and the whole city of Jerusalem. The veil, which separated the holy place from the holiest of holies, was rent in two, from the top to the bottom, laying open the sacred spot, which none ever entered except the high-priest on the Day of Atonement.

On Calvary, those who had gathered to see the sight were at last terrified, and returned to the city, smiting upon their breasts. The centurion in command of the Roman soldiers, who had probably watched and listened to the dying prophet with interest, was struck with fear, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

But before sunset, the Pharisees, always very scrupulous not to break the law, came to Pilate, and besought him that all three of those who were being crucified should be put to death at once, because the next day was a Sabbath, and their bodies ought not to be hanging on the crosses on the Sabbath day. The soldiers were ordered to despatch the dying men by breaking their legs; but when they came to Jesus, and found that he was dead already, they refrained from mutilating his body; yet, lest any spark of life lingered which might be fanned into a flame, one of them pierced his side with a spear. Thus they made sure that he was dead.

In the meantime another applicant had gone to Pilate. This was Joseph of Arimathea, a well-known man, rich, honorable, and good, one of the Sanhedrim itself, though he had not consented to the death of Christ. was a timid man, and a secret disciple; but shocked by the deeds of his fellow-councillors, he went boldly in to Pilate, and begged that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate marvelled whether he were yet dead, and called the centurion to ask him if it were so. He then willingly granted the body to Joseph, who had already provided himself with fine linen for When he returned to Calvary, Nicodemus accompanied the entombment. him, bringing a large quantity of spices. The women from Galilee were lingering about the place; and now, in the cool and gloom of the evening, they took the body down from the cross, and wrapped it, with the spices scattered amid the folds, in the linen cloth. Close by was a garden belonging to Joseph, and in it a new tomb, which he had hewn for himself in the midst of his garden. No man had ever lain in it. No taint of death pol-Here they buried their Lord hastily, for the Sabbath was near. Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdalene sat close by, watching, but perhaps too overcome with grief to give any active assistance. The women from Galilee also saw the sepulchre, and how his body was lain. Then all of them returned to the city, to prepare spices and ointments for the embalming of the corpse as soon as the Sabbath was over.

The enemics of Christ had not been prepared for this honorable burial of their victim. If Joseph of Arimathea had not interfered, his body would have been carried away from Calvary, with those of the thieves, and carelessly laid in a common grave, where criminals, who had died a shameful death, were flung together. The followers of Jesus, poor obscure Galileans, could not have had influence enough to save the corpse from this degrading fate. But the Sanhedrim found that two of their own chief men, startled by their fierceness and injustice into open discipleship, had interposed promptly to claim the body of their Lord, and to lay it in the new tomb of a rich man, amidst the cool and quiet fragrance of a garden, where those who loved him might visit his resting-place unnoticed and unmolested.

The Sabbath was come; a high day. The Sabbath of the passover was no doubt the most important of all the weekly Sabbaths in the year. The immense multitudes that thronged Jerusalem, and dwelt even in tents outside the walls, because there was not room enough in the city, filled the temple courts, and crowded into the synagogues. Sabbath days were especially days of feasting and rejoicing with the Jews; friends met together; no work at all was done; both men and women were dressed in their best apparel, and desired to see and to be seen. Probably, too, this Sabbath fell upon the day for waving the first-fruits before Jehovah. At the hour when Christ was buried, a sheaf of standing corn had been reaped with special rites for the purpose in a field near Jerusalem; and possibly this ceremony had been one reason why Joseph and Nicodemus had been left undisturbed in their burial of the body.

How the friends of Jesus passed this mournful day we can only faintly imagine. Whether there was any brighter hope, or more perfect understanding, in Mary's mind of what was to follow, we do not know. But the rest were insensible to every consolation; they forgot altogether the words Jesus had spoken to them about rising again. They had so long refused to believe that he would give himself up to death that now they were too stunned to remember that he had promised to return to them.

But Christ's enemies did not forget this. Towards the close of the Sabbath the chief priests and leading Pharisees came together to Pilate. One tremor had seized upon them in their hour of triumph. "Sir, we remember," they said, "that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate cared little for any error, but he could not afford to offend the chief priests. "Ye have a watch," he answered, "go your way, make it as sure as ye can." The watch

consisted of Roman soldiers, not of the temple guard, who, as Jews, could not touch a sepulchre without being defiled. The soldiers made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone; and when the watch was set, the priests and Pharisees went their way, satisfied that no second error could arise to deceive the people. It was the Sabbath, and therefore it was unlawful to touch the dead, or they might have removed the body to the common grave of executed criminals.

No doubt there must have been much discussion that day throughout Jerusalem. None of these things which had come to pass were done in a corner, in some remote place in Galilee, but in the holy city itself, during the passover week. Jesus was well known as a prophet of the most blameless life. Every one had heard before, or heard then, of Lazarus, who was probably hiding from the malice of the chief priests and Pharisees. Rumors would run along, from one to another, of the indecent haste with which the execution had been hurried on. The bargain with the traitor would be whispered about; the midnight arrest in Gethsemane; the meeting of the Sanhedrim, not in the temple, but in the high-priest's palace: the early and hasty trial before Pilate, and the swift execution of the sentence: all these would be discussed passionately in favor of, or against Christ, during the leisure of that Sabbath. Thousands among them were disappointed. Those who were not the professed followers of Jesus had been ready to follow him, if he would but make himself intelligible to them. They were longing for a Messiah; and if he had been such a Messiah as they expected, and could understand, they would have joyfully flocked under his banner, and fought for his kingdom. But he, who might have been dwelling in regal splendor under the roof of the royal palace, had been hung upon a shameful cross between two thieves. They had seen the end of Jesus of Nazareth—a bitter, ignominious death. Was he not, then, what the chief rulers of the people called him, a deceiver?

### CHAPTER IX.

### The Sepulchre.

ON Friday evening, while Joseph and Nicodemus were laying the body of the Lord in the grave, his aunt, Mary Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala were sitting over against the sepulchre, watching. The other women from Galilee also saw the place where he was laid. Probably they

all returned to the city together, to buy spices and ointments for the embalming; and before they separated made arrangements for meeting again early, after the Sabbath was ended. As nothing could be done before day-break, we may easily conjecture that they agreed to meet soon after the dawn, either in the garden itself, or by the city gate nearest to it.

But upon Sunday morning, whilst it was yet dark, over-early or before the appointed time, Mary Magdalene and Mary Cleophas, restless in their sorrow, started off to see the sepulchre beforehand. On their way they were joined by Salome, the mother of John, who was probably staying in the same house as Mary, the mother of Jesus. They had bought sweet spices, but the other women were to bring them to the sepulchre. No light yet shone in the sky, except the first faint gray of the morning in the east. But possibly they may have seen a sudden light gleaming in the direction of the garden, and felt the shock of an earthquake, like that which had rent the rocks on Friday. If so, they would naturally pause for a while, terrified; yet, when all was calm again, and the quiet dawn grew stronger, waking up the birds, whose twittering was the only sound to be heard, they would go on, though troubled and trembling, to the sepulchre.

But what had caused the shock of earthquake? The Roman guard, possibly the same that had watched under the cross, and divided the Lord's garments among them, were already looking forward to being relieved from their watch, when they saw an angel, whose face was like lightning, descend from the dark heavens above them, and they felt the earth quake and tremble beneath their feet. He rolled back the stone from the sepulchre they were guarding: and for fear of him they became as dead men. They saw nothing else than the bright, awful face and the glistening whiteness of the form that sat on the stone near them. They did not see Christ quit his tomb.

By the time the two Marys and Salome reached the garden, the dawn was light enough for them to see objects at some distance. They do not seem to have known of the guard being set to watch the grave; for their talk was only of the difficulty of removing the large stone which filled the opening of the cave. Probably their special purpose in coming to view the sepulchre was to ascertain whether the women alone could roll it away, and effect an entrance without aid. On Friday evening, in the twilight, and overwhelmed as they were with grief, they had not sufficiently noticed this difficulty. Now, as they drew near, what was their amazement and dismay to see the stone already removed, and the cave open!

Their fears sprang to one conclusion, and only one. The beloved body of their Lord had been violently taken away—stolen by his implacable enemies—during the night. It had been still further degraded and dishonored by being cast into the common grave of criminals. Mary Magdalene, leaving the other Mary and Salome, fled back into the city to seek Peter and John, and arouse them to help, if help were not too late. Very probably these two disciples were lodging in the same house; for at the time of the feasts every dwelling in Jerusalem was crowded with guests. "They have taken away the Lord," cried Mary, when she found them, "and we know not where they have laid him."

In the meantime Mary Cleophas and Salome went on to the sepulchre. They were women past middle life, with the calmness and passiveness of years and sorrows, and they did not shrink from entering into the sepulchre. They had set out, indeed, with the intention of preparing the body for a second burial. But there was no lifeless corpse there. They were affrighted, however, by seeing an angel, clothed in white, sitting on the right side. "Fear not," he said to them, "for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he is arisen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. Lo, I have told you." Salome and Mary Cleophas fled from the sepulchre trembling and amazed; and probably passing by John and Peter in their bewilderment, they said nothing to them about what they had seen, but went on into the city, in fear and great joy, to bring the disciples word.

Now, when they were going, some, but not all, of the Roman guard hastened to the chief priests, and told them what had come to pass. A council was immediately summoned; and, after much discussion, they seem to have persuaded themselves that the soldiers had been sleeping, and that, as they slept, the disciples had stolen away the body. The guard owned to having been like dead men from fright; and none of them professed to have seen Jesus leave the grave. The council gave them large sums of money to spread about this report, which they did so successfully, that those who thought better of the testimony of two or three heathen soldiers than of that of hundreds of their own countrymen, who had nothing to gain but everything to lose by their testimony, believed the saying, and commonly reported it as a fact.

Very shortly after Salome and Mary Cleophas left the grave, John and

Peter reached it. John had outrun Peter, but with the sensitive shrinking of a young nature, unused to death, he did not go in. Stooping down, he saw the linen clothes, that fine linen Joseph had prepared, lying on the floor of the cave. It was quite evident his Master was not there. But Peter. coming up, stepped at once into the sepulchre, to look round it. There was no sign of haste or violence, as there must have been if a band of rough foes had trampled in to steal away the body. The fair linen cloth was unsoiled, and the napkin that had been bound about the worn and anguished face had been wrapped together, as if his mother's gentle hands had folded it up tenderly, and laid it aside by itself. There was nothing terrifying about the quiet, empty tomb; and John, with all his sensitive love for his Lord, might enter and feel no shock. He also went in, and looking round, felt a gleam of faith, like the dawn of a new and splendid day, breaking upon him. But they could not linger in the empty grave. Mary, the mother of Jesus, ought to hear these strange tidings; and they went away to tell her.

Now, Mary Magdalene stood without, at the door of the cave, weeping. Like John, she did not venture to go in. She was alone; Peter and John were gone, and the other women were not yet come. The garden was a solitude. Nothing had occurred to deliver her from her agonizing fears. To her it was her Lord, not his body merely, that they had taken away. The hurried departure of Peter and John, and the absence of Salome and Mary Cleophas, must have confirmed her suspicions. She stooped down, as John had done, to look at the place where he had lain. There was the spot where his thorn-crowned head had been pillowed, and his pierced feet had rested. But the grave was no longer empty. At the feet, and the head, where the body of Jesus had lain, sat two angels, bending over the place, as if still watching him, just as she would have sat and watched him if she might but have stayed beside him, even in the sepulchre. The angels neither astonished nor affrighted her; she was too engrossed in her sorrow. "Woman, why weepest thou?" they asked. She answered them without fear—the only human being who has spoken to angels with no tremor— "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She even turned away from them, as from those who could give her no comfort, while her Lord was lost. Dimly through her tears she saw some one standing near her, and heard the same question, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" These last words gave her the idea that it must be the gardener, who would know all that had taken

place in the garden under his care. "Sir," she cried, "if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, that I may take him away." She had but one thought in her mind: where was her Lord?

"Mary," said the voice behind her—a familiar voice; and she turned quickly, crying gladly, passionately, "Rabboni!" He called her from the abyss of despair to a rapture of joy beyond words. She sprang towards him to touch him, to make sure that it was he himself whom she had seen die upon the cross. In a moment she was back again to the happy hours in Galilec, when she had ministered unto him, before all this agony came. As before, one thought alone possessed her soul. Here was her Master, he who had saved her in the old bad days.

But Christ was not the same. A solemn change had passed over him, which must alter all his relations with his old friends. She was too excited to feel this; but his first words arrested her. "Touch me not," he said; possibly meaning, "Stay not to touch me now, for I am not yet ascending unto my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; unto my God, and your God." He was their elder brother, who could remain with them but a little while, and then they would see him no more, but he would represent them in the Father's house, where he was going to prepare a place for them. Mary knew she also should see him again; and when he vanished out of her sight, she stayed not a moment longer at the sepulchre, but went to tell them she had seen the Lord.

All these circumstances had followed one another rapidly; and it may be that the women who were to bring the spices and ointments had been delayed, or perhaps had waited some little time for Salome and the two Marys at the appointed place of meeting. Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, was the chief person among them, as the woman of greatest wealth and rank. They were not at all surprised at finding the stone rolled back from the door of the sepulchre, supposing that it had been done on purpose for them. But they found the body they had come to embalm taken away. This very much perplexed them; though they were not afraid until they saw two men standing by them, in shining garments. So terrified were they, that they bowed their faces to the earth before them. The angels said to them, as if marvelling at these repeated visits to the grave, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified,

and the third day rise again." Then the women remembered these words, wondering at their own forgetfulness. They returned at once to the city; and as they were not likely to single out Peter or John, as Mary Magdalene had done, to be the first hearers of their tidings, they went quickly to some common place of meeting among the disciples, and there found a large party assembled, which had been probably called together by Peter, to hear that the body of the Lord was gone no one knew whither. The women told the vision they had seen; but the disciples could not believe them, and their words seemed as idle tales. Peter, however, hearing of the appearance of angels, arose, and ran again to the sepulchre for the second time; but stooping down, he saw no such vision, only the linen clothes laid as he had seen them before. He returned to the assembly of the disciples, full of wonder at what had come to pass.

It is natural to suppose that Mary Magdalene, who had hastened to John's house when she knew the grave was open, would also go there after she had seen Christ. Mary, his mother, would thus hear first of the appearance of her Son. Finding there that Peter and John had left to call together the disciples at some appointed place, Mary Magdalene followed them; and soon after Joanna and the women from Galilee had told of their vision of angels, she entered to relate the appearance of the Lord himself to her in the garden. She had even a message to deliver to them. But the incredulous and bewildered disciples could not believe her, and probably said among themselves that grief had distracted her mind. When Peter returned from the sepulchre, having seen nothing, this conviction would naturally be deepened.

But presently Mary Cleophas and Salome, the aunt of Jesus, and the mother of James and John, women not likely to be deceived, or to mistake a stranger for their Lord, came in with another account of having seen him, and of receiving a message from him for his brethren. But still the incredulous disciples refused to believe. Mary Magdalene owned that she had not touched Jesus, had indeed been forbidden to touch him; but these two women declared that they had not only met him, but that when they heard his greeting, they had fallen down to worship him, being afraid, and had held him by his feet. "Be not afraid," he had said, "go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

There was this excuse for the unbelief of the disciples that as yet the only manifestations, either of angels or of the Lord himself, had been to women, who are always more excited, and more open to superstitious fancies, in

hours of sorrow, than men are. The simple facts, as known to the disciples, were, that the sepulchre was open at daybreak, and the body of their Master missing. Who had broken open the grave they could not tell; but their suspicion must have been that some enemy had done it.

The news spread rapidly throughout Jerusalem, and no doubt crowds of curious spectators flocked to the garden to see the open tomb. Amongst them the partisans of the Sanhedrim diligently spread the report that the body was stolen away by the disciples, while the guard slept. It would be no longer prudent for the well-known followers of Jesus to be seen near Calvary and Gethsemane; but those who were less marked among his friends probably mingled with the throng, and from time to time brought tidings to the assembly of disciples of what was going on. The hours wore away, and still they were in perplexity and unbelief. Three women only had seen him; one of these had not touched him, and the other two had been so bewildered and amazed, as to have kept their interview with him to themselves, until after Mary Magdalene had given her account.

### CHAPTER X.

### Emmaus.

WHEN the disciples were first called together by Peter and John, there were among them two friends, one of whom was named Cleophas, not the husband of Mary, but probably a native of Emmaus, a village about nine miles from the city. They were present when the party of Galilean women, with Joanna, came to tell of seeing two angels in the sepulchre. Possibly they went with Peter, when he ran a second time to the grave; but they did not return with him, as they did not hear the statement of Mary Magdalene, or of Salome and Mary Cleophas. Very likely they lingered about the garden amongst the crowd, listening to the various guesses and rumors concerning the strange event, until it was time to start on their long walk homewards. Calvary lay north or northeast of the city walls, and Emmaus to the east; there was no need therefore for them to return through the busy streets, where they might have heard that their risen Lord had appeared to, not one, but three of the women, who had loved him so faithfully, and ministered to him so long. Sad.

though it was a feast time when joyousness was a duty, these men might well be.

It is a toilsome road, and the afternoon sun beat hot upon them. But the heeded neither the heat of the sun nor the roughness of the road. They were reasoning and pondering over the events that had followed quickly upon one another, since they had entered Jerusalem to eat the feast of the passover. There had been the betrayal, the arrest, the mock trial before the Sanhedrim, the real trial before Pilate, the scourging, the crucifixion, the darkness at noon-day, and earthquake, all hurried one upon another. They might well be sad and downcast as they communed about these things.

Presently a stranger, journeying the same toilsome road, drew near and asked them how it was they could be thus sorrowful during the feast. Cleophas answered him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days?" All Jerusalem was busy about them, and this stranger, who seemed to be coming from the city, might surely guess what they were talking about. Yet he said, "What things?" And now Cleophas, concluding that he was indeed a stranger, told him of Jesus of Nazareth, the mighty prophet, who had been condemned to death by the Great Sanhedrim, their rulers. "But we trusted," he went on, sorrowfully, "that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel." Then he narrated how certain women had astonished them that morning, who did not find his body in the sepulchre, but came saying they had seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. "But him they saw not," added Cleophas to the stranger walking at his side.

"O foolish men!" he answered gently, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" They, like all other Jews, were well versed in the writings of Moses and the prophets; but as this stranger explained to them passages perfectly familiar to them, they stood out in a new light, with deeper meaning than any they had had before. Their hearts, slow to believe, burned within them. Was it, then, true that Jesus was that Holy One whose soul should not be left in hell, nor his flesh see corruption? The long road seemed short; the rocky path no longer rugged to their feet; the heat of the sun was unfelt. How fast the time fled! How quickly Emmaus was seen on its hill before them! Who could this stranger be, so wise and gracious, whom they loved already, and could listen to unweariedly, almost as if he were the Lord himself?



They were close to the village now, and he made as though he would have gone farther; but they could not part with him yet, stranger though he was. It was getting on for evening, and the day was far spent. "Abide with us," said both of them; and he went into tarry with them, as they hoped, until the morning. He had charmed away their sadness, and taught them what they had never known before. How gladly would they minister to this new friend! When they sat down to supper they set him in the most honorable place, to preside over their evening meal. He took bread, blessing and breaking it with some words or gesture peculiar to Christ, and gave it to them, as he had been wont to do when he sat at meat with his disciples. Now their eyes were no longer holden that they should not know him. It was he himself; their crucified and risen Lord. For one brief, glad moment they saw his beloved face, and the pierced hands, which had given to them the bread. Then he vanished out of their sight; but this was yet another proof to them that it was indeed the Lord.

At once they rose up to return to Jerusalem, thinking nothing of the long walk and the coming night, when they had such tidings to carry to the disciples, and the mother and kinsmen of Christ. It must have been late when they reached the city, but they found ten of the apostles, with a number of the disciples, gathered together, though with closed doors, and precautions taken, for fear of the Pharisees. Who was there? The women probably, Lazarus from Bethany, Nicodemus, perhaps, and Joseph of Arimathea, whose garden had been trampled by so many feet that day. There was great agitation among them still. Had the body of Jesus been stolen away from the grave? Was it not his spirit only which had been seen by the women? Even Peter, who had also now seen the Lord, the apostle who denied him being the first to whom he revealed himself; Peter could hardly believe that it was his Master, and not a spirit. Yet when the two disciples from Emmaus entered, they were met by the cry, "The Lord has arisen indeed, and appeared unto Simon." But Cleophas and his companion had something more to tell of than a mere brief appearance. They described the stranger joining them, and walking mile after mile with them, conversing all the while familiarly; how he went into tarry with them, and sat down to meat, and was known to them in the breaking of bread. This the disciples could not believe. Cleophas and his friend do not seem to have been very renowned followers of Jesus, and the other disciples were hard of belief. Those among them who had seen him had eaught but brief glimpses of him. Mary Magdalene had not been allowed

to touch him; Salome and his aunt Mary had only held his feet; to Peter he had appeared certainly, but not in this homely manner as a fellow-traveller along the same rough way.

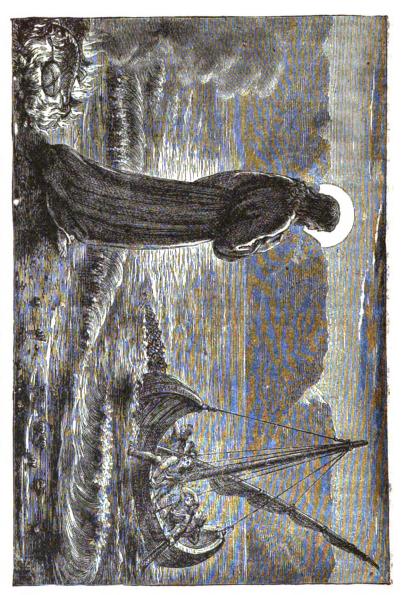
They were still speaking incredulously about these new tidings, when suddenly, with no opening of the fastened doors, and no sound of entering. they saw Jesus himself standing in the midst of them, and heard his voice, saying, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they saw a spirit. There was none bold enough to try to touch him, and no one dared to speak. With great gentleness and tenderness he "Behold my hands and my feet," he said, showing them reproached them. the print of the nails; "handle me, and see. It is I myself. A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Their terror and trouble were pacified, but still they were not calm enough for faith. They could not now believe for joy. But to give them time to collect themselves, he asked for food, as once before he had commanded something to eat to be given to the ruler's little daughter, when he called her back from the grave. He ate before them, a convincing proof that he was no spirit; and then he was seen no more by them. But there was no room for unbelief among them The load upon their hearts, like the great stone of the sepulchre, was rolled away forever. Their Lord was arisen indeed.

### CHAPTER XI.

### It is the Lord.

THOUGH the chief priests and Pharisees carefully reported that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus of Nazareth, they took no steps to prove the fact, or to punish the violators of the grave. The whole number of the disciples remained in Jerusalem during the feast, and the Sabbath following the feast. Even on the first day of the week after it, when the bulk of the Galileans had started homewards, the eleven apostles still lingered in the city. Thomas, who had vehemently refused to believe in the resurrection of his Master because he had not seen him, had passed the week in alternate mourning and disputing with those who vainly sought to convince him. He saw Mary, the mother of Christ, comforted, and full of gladness; his fellow-disciples rejoicing and exultant; yet to all they urged he answered, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put





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my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." It was a miserable week for him, for he was deeply attached to his crucified Master, and timid and despondent as he was, he had once said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." But he could not be persuaded that he had risen from the dead.

Eight days had passed since Jesus had been seen; and the eleven apostles were sitting together, the doors being shut for fear of the Pharisees, as on the week before, when once more he stood in their midst, with no sign or sound of coming, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then turning to Thomas, and speaking directly to him, he added, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." But he did not now need the evidence he had demanded; it was enough to see his Master, and hear him speak. Jesus wished to prove to him he was the very Son of man, who had died upon the cross. Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God!"

The apostles no longer lingered in Jerusalem. They were needed in their homes in Galilee, and it was safer for them to assemble together there, where the chief priests had less power than in Judæa. Moreover, there would be many arrangements to make for their families, before they could set out on those missionary journeys which soon scattered them into far countries. They scarcely yet knew what their Lord would have them to do, but for a short time longer they were sent to dwell in their own homes, among their own people, following their old trades amid familiar scenes.

Seven of them were dwelling near Capernaum, on the shores of the lake, where they had earned their livelihood by fishing. Peter said to his comrades, one evening after their return from Jerusalem, "I go a fishing." Thomas and Nathanael, James and John, with two others, joined him, and, entering into a boat, launched out upon the dark waters, and toiled all night, but came back to the land with empty nets. In the cold gray of the morning they were going ashore, disappointed and hungry men, when they saw on the dim beach a man standing to watch them. It was still too dark for them to see clearly. "Children, have ye any meat?" his voice called across the water. There is nothing unusual in such a question from a bystander, who has been looking on while men are fishing. "No," they shouted back; for they were still some distance from the land. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find," was the advice given. He might see signs of fish which had escaped them; and they obeyed, feel-

ing that though their toil had been in vain all night, one chance cast of the net might atone for their want of success. If not, they could but return empty, as they were now doing.

While they cast their net the light grew stronger, and the morning shone upon the lake and shore, upon the disciples in their boat, and the solitary stranger looking on. But soon the net was so full of fish, that they could not draw it; and quickly there flashed through the mind of John the memory of that morning, when Jesus had called them to leave their nets, and follow him. "It is the Lord," he said to Peter. There he stood in the morning light at the edge of the waters where they were fishing. Possibly, nay probably, there was already shining about him a transfiguring glory, such as they had witnessed on the mountain, when his face was as the sun, and his raiment as white as the glistering snow. Peter at once threw himself into the lake, that he might the sooner reach the Master he had once denied; and the rest followed in their boat, dragging their net with them.

Just such a reception met them as may have welcomed them often in the old days, when, though disciples, they still had to earn their bread. No doubt their Lord had often ministered to them before he washed their feet at the Last Supper. There was a fire already kindled on the beach, lit for them whilst they were toiling, hungry and weary, in the darkness; and fish was broiling on it, and cakes of bread were baking in the hot ashes. It was a homely, simple welcome, such as one of themselves might have prepared for his comrades. They and their Master had often eaten their meals together thus in the open air, beside a little fire on the ground. "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," said Jesus to them; and Peter ran and drew the net to land, counting the fish as he took them out of the unbroken meshes. Presently Jesus said to them, "Come and dine." But none of them durst say, "Who art thou?" They were silent in happy awe.

The meal was ready, and they hungry with their night's toil. They were at home on the shores of their own lake. Every hill, every village, every landmark about them, lying clear in the early light, was as familiar to them as the faces of old friends. The freshness of the morning air brought to them the scent of flowers such as they had plucked when children. The little waves of the lake rippled up against the margin, chiming as it had done to them when they were boys. The larks sang overhead, and the waterfowl cried across the water. How different was this from that upper chamber in Jerusalem, when their Master's soul was troubled, and exceed-

ingly sorrowful, as he said there was a traitor among them. There was no traitor now, no agony in Gethsemane, no cruel foes, no cross. All these were forever past.

Once again Jesus took bread, and, breaking it, he gave it to them. In silence, blissful, yet reverent, they took their food from his hand, and satisfied their hunger. They knew that it was the Lord, and that was enough. When the meal was over, three times Christ asked of Peter the question, "Lovest thou me?" until at the third time Peter was aggrieved. "Lord," he cried, "thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus bade him feed his lambs and his sheep; and signified to him what death he should die for his sake. By this time the morning had advanced, and the people were waking up to their day's work in the fields, or upon the lake, and Jesus withdrew from his disciples, saying to Peter, "Follow me." All of them were about to enter upon the life he had quitted; they would be persecuted, cast out of the synagogue, and put to death as he had been. The servant could not be above his master, nor the disciple above his Lord. They must all, even Peter, who had denied him, follow him through shame and suffering to a bitter end. Peter understood Christ's words literally, and rose up to follow him; John also could not stay behind if he might but be with his Lord in that mysterious solitude whither he was about to vanish, and whence he came so suddenly among them. But here they could not follow him. Peter asked a question as to what John should do in the perilous future they were about to enter; but Jesus checked his curiosity by a vague, indefinite answer before passing out of their sight. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead.

### CHAPTER XII.

### His Friends.

TWICE had the Lord been seen by the women who ministered unto him; three times by the apostles. But a still larger assembly were to have proof that he had indeed risen from the dead. Whilst Jesus was yet in Galilee, before his crucifixion, he had told not only his twelve apostles, but the mass of his disciples, that he should be crucified, and rise again on the third day. He had also fixed upon a mountain where he would

appear unto them after this resurrection, probably a mountain in some central point, where all could assemble to meet him. More than five hundred disciples flocked to this appointed place, men and women, those whom he had delivered from blindness, sickness, sorrow, even from evil spirits. None would be absent who could possibly reach the quiet mountain, where their crucified Lord would meet them in his own person; no spirit; no illusion. A few even yet doubted; but the rest worshipped him. Speaking to them all, not to the apostles merely, he bade them teach all nations to observe whatsoever he had commanded. Each disciple was to be a messenger of the good tidings for him; though only a chosen few were to forsake all to become his ambassadors to distant lands.

There was one of the Lord's disciples, who had been his companion, not for a few months only, nor for two or three years, but during his whole life. They had been boys together, dwelt in the same village, climbed the hills side by side, learned from the same schoolmaster, gone together to the synagogue Sabbath after Sabbath; perhaps worked at the same carpenter's bench. This was James, the son of his aunt, Mary Cleophas, of whom tradition says he closely resembled the Lord in his personal appearance. Jesus appeared alone to him, in some quiet, unknown hour, which would have remained a secret from us if James had not himself told it to Paul some years afterwards. Jesus had not ceased to love those whom he had loved in his early life; and it may be he appeared to James to satisfy some passionate yearning of his cousin's heart, for one more hour of such communion as those they had had together on the hills round Nazareth.

For forty days after his resurrection Christ remained upon earth, showing himself alive by many infallible proofs, eating and drinking with his disciples; being seen of them, and touched by them; teaching them, and speaking to them things pertaining to the kingdom of God, which they were to preach. He had said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man taketh from you." His words were fulfilled. The joy of his resurrection had made them strong to face the perils they had once dreaded; and by many a proof he made this joy unspeakable, and full of glory. No king, no high-priest, no emperor, not all the powers and principalities of the whole world, could take this joy from them. Now the time was come when Christ could trust his message with them, and leave them to go to the Father.

The mission of the apostles was to begin at Jerusalem—the city of his crucifixion. There, some days before the feast of Penteoost, they were once

more gathered together, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women, and his kinsmen, waiting for his last revelation of himself. Jesus came to them and led them out as far as Bethany, on the Mount of Olives; but whether all were there, or his apostles only, we cannot 'tell. Seen and heard by them, but invisible to eyes that had no love for him, he passed along that road, down which the thronging multitudes had swept in glad procession, waving palm branches, and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Once more he looked upon the doomed city, over which he had wept, and which was now crowned by its blackest sin. "Begin at Jerusalem," he said. Even yet the apostles did not fully understand him. "Lord," they asked, "wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They beheld their beautiful city, with its magnificent temple and gorgeous palaces, and still thought it, blood-stained as it was, a fitting throne for their risen Lord. Again, as once before, he told them they were not to know the times and seasons which the Father had kept in his own power.

Past the home at Bethany, which he had loved so much, and blessed so wondrously, Jesus led his disciples to some solitary spot on the mountain, where Jerusalem, the guilty city, with Calvary at her gates, was hidden from their view. Lifting up his pierced hands, he blessed them, his friends who had been with him in his tribulation; but whilst he was yet speaking a cloud came down to overshadow them, as they had been overshadowed in the Mount of Transfiguration. Their loving hands could clasp him no longer; they could hear him no more, but falling down, they worshipped him, as he was thus carried away from them. Even when all was lost to their sight, that bright chariot of cloud in which he was ascending on high amidst thousands of angels, and leading captivity captive, when that had faded in the deep blue of the heavens, they stood gazing steadfastly toward the point where it had vanished, until two men in white apparel spoke to them, saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

In great joy they returned to Jerusalem, along the well-known road, with Gethsemane not far off, and Calvary in sight. With one accord they, with the women, and Mary, and all the kinsmen of the Lord, continued together in prayer and supplication, going up constantly to the temple to praise and bless God.

### CHAPTER XIII.

### His Foes.

BUT what of the enemies of Christ? the traitor, the priestly persecutors, the unjust judge, the cowardly tetrarch, nay the city itself, which could suffer such crimes? A few years after the crucifixion, Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, was goaded on by Herodias to solicit the rank and title of king from the Roman emperor. Her brother, Herod Agrippa, had been made king of those provinces which had been governed by Philip the tetrarch; and he arrived in Palestine, A. D. 38. His kingly state excited the ambition and jealousy of Herodias, who at last succeeded in carrying Herod Antipas to Rome to supplant Agrippa in the favor of the emperor. But Agrippa's influence proved stronger than theirs; and instead of being allowed to return to Palestine, Herod Antipas was banished, and from that time till his death dragged out the life of an exile in Gaul and Spain. Herodias did not forsake him; the only good thing we know of that wicked woman.

Pilate had sacrificed Christ to his fears of being misrepresented to the emperor. The very fate he dreaded befell him; for riots becoming more and more frequent under his rule, both in Judæa and Samaria, his superior, the prefect of Syria, sent him to Rome for trial. He arrived there just after the death of Tiberius, who had been his friend and patron; and Caligula, his successor, banished him also to Gaul, where, it is said, he died by his own hand, unable to bear his disgrace and exile.

After the departure of Pilate, the prefect of Syria visited Jerusalem, and removed Caiaphas from his office as high-priest. But a son of Annas was put in his place, and the chief power of the priesthood remained in the family for a long period. Annas himself died in extreme old age, and was considered by his countrymen one of the happiest men of his time and nation.

or a brief space under Herod Agrippa, who was made king of Judæa and Samaria, as well as of the provinces east of the Jordan, Jerusalem enjoyed prosperity, whilst the early Christians suffered many persecutions, Herod putting James, the brother of John, to death, to please the Jews. But immediately after this, upon the death of Herod, A. D. 45, a severe famine, lasting two years, befell Judæa. Soon afterwards, at the feast of the passover, many thousands of the people perished in a tumult caused by

the intrusion of the Roman soldiers into the temple. A set of fanatics and assassins began to infest Jerusalem and its neighborhood, some of whom slew the high-priest, a son of Annas, whilst sacrificing. Riots and massacres became more and more common. False Messiahs sprang up. Rival highpriests headed different parties, each bent upon plunder. At last the Jews broke out into open insurrection against the Roman power; but they were also divided among themselves, and separated into many factions, at deadly enmity with one another. The Roman army besieged Jerusalem, A. D. 70. when it was crowded with strangers and pilgrims come up to keep the passover. Thousands perished in battle, thousands more by famine and murder within the walls, and when the city was taken, the old and sickly were massacred, children under seventeen years of age were sold into slavery, and the rest were sent in multitudes to make up gladiatorial shows in the amphitheatres of Rome and the provinces. "The whole of the city was so thoroughly levelled and dug up, that no one visiting it would believe it had ever been inhabited." It is said that not one of the Christians perished in the siege, as they fled from the doomed city before it was surrounded by the Roman army.

But a far swifter and more direct destruction befell the man, who knew, and knew distinctly, what he was doing when he betrayed his Lord into the hands of his enemies. Judas was not ignorant of the purposes of the Sanhedrim; he was no stranger to Jesus. He had even been one of his familiar friends, in whom he trusted. He had been an eye-witness, like the other apostles, of the wondrous life of Jesus from the beginning. He had himself preached the gospel, and done works of mercy in the name of his Master. Yet he clearly understood that the bribe for which he bargained to betray him was but the price of his blood. For he had been with Christ when he was hiding from his enemies, who sought to kill him by any means, by private assassination, or by sudden tumult. To sell Jesus to the chief priests, he knew, was to betray innocent blood.

We are led to suppose that Judas accompanied the band which carried Jesus from Gethsemane to the palace of the high-priest, a dark-spirited, anxious, skulking villain, already hearing a low whisper of that storm of remorse which was soon to drive him to despair. The wages of his sin were promptly paid to him; yet still he seems to have lingered about the spot where his Master was, watching how things went on. It was night, and he was friendless. All his old comrades would now turn from him in terror. He was not a stupid man; he could feel keenly. There was but one spark

of comfort—his purse was no longer empty, and the little field he coveted could now be his. As soon as the day dawned he would go and see about it.

Possibly there was a faint, lingering hope that Jesus might deliver himself. Once before he had passed invisibly through the midst of his foes, when they took up stones to kill him. Perhaps he had heard Jesus say to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" But the faint hope died away as the cruel hours sped on; and when Jesus suffered them to lead him away, bound, before Pilate, Judas knew he would not save himself. He ought to have known it before. A fierce passion of remorse seized upon him. Wildly he fled to the temple, where the priests, his tempters, were already preparing to celebrate their solemn day of peace-offering for the nation. He forced his way into the inner portions of the sacred place. probably into the hall of the Sanhedrim, where the priests assembled early every morning to cast lots for the services of the day. He flung down the thirty pieces of silver, crying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!" The priests heard, and answered him with a sneer. "What is that to us?" they asked; "see thou to that!" Judas left the money, the price of his Lord, and departed forever from the temple.

It may be he lingered through the terrible morning of the crucifixion, until after the awful crime in which he had had a chief share was completed. Then, seeking out the field he had coveted, and which was all but purchased, he put an end to his miserable life. Not without warning had this bitter end come, a merciful warning from his Lord, who had said, whilst there was yet time for him to repent, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."



### ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL AIDS

TO THE

### STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ARRANGED SO. AS BEST TO ASSIST RESEARCH AND CONTRIBUTE

TO A

### FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INSPIRED WORD.

### BIBLE SYNCHRONOLOGY.

IN TEN PERIODS.

PERIOD.		YEARS.
T.	FROM THE CREATION, B. C. 4004, TO THE DELUGE, B. C. 2348	1656
II.	FROM THE DELUGE TO THE CALL OF ABBAHAM, B. C. 1921	427
111.	FROM ABRAHAM TO THE EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES, B. C. 1491	430
1V.	FROM EXODE, TO THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN, B. C. 1451	40
v.	FROM ENTRANCE, TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUL, B. C. 1095	356
VI.	FROM SAUL TO COMPLETION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, B. C. 1004	91
VII.	FROM TEMPLE TO BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, B. C. 588	416
VIII.	FROM CAPTIVITY TO CLOSING OF OLD TESTAMENT CANON, B. C. 420	168
IX.	FROM CLOSING OF OLD TESTAMENT CANON TO CHRISTIAN ERA, A. D	420
<b>x</b> .	FROM CHRISTIAN ERA TO END OF COMPLETED CANON, A. D. 100	100

### ANTEDILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.

PERIOD I. 1656 YEARS.

BIRTH.	BIRTH.		DEATH.	DEATH.	AGE.
B. C.	A. M.		B. C.	A. M.	
· 4004		Creation of Adam and Eve	(Adam) 3074	930	930
3874	130	Seth	2962	1042	912
3769	235	Enos	2864	1140	905
3679	325	Cainan	2769	1235	910 .
3609	395	Mahalaleel	2714	1290	895
3544	460	Ja red	2582	1422	962
3382	622	Enoch	(Transl.) 3017	987	365
3317	687	Methuselah	2348	1656	969
3130	874	Lamech	2353	1651	777
2948	1056	Noah	1998	2006	950
2446	1558	Shem	1846	2158	600
2:148	1656	ShemaTHE DELUGE.	1010	2100	300

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### TABLE, SHOWING HOW THE EARTH WAS REPEOPLED BY THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH.

#### THE SORS OF NOAH WERE

SHEM, IIAM, JAPRETH.

Shem's sons were	They settled	The principal nations which sprang from them, were
Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram.	Assyria, Syria, Persia, Northern Arabia, Mesopotamia.	Persians, Assyrians, Chaldeeans, Lydians, Armenians, Syrians.
Ham's sone were	They settled	The principal nations which sprang from them, were
Cush,	The Continent	Ethiopians,
Misraim,	of	Egyptians,
Phut, Canaan.	Africa and Arabia.	Libyans, Canasnites.
The sous of Japheth were	They settled	The principal nations which sprang from them, were
Gomer,	Asia Minor,	Russians, Germans, Gauls, Britons, Scyth
Magng,	Armenia,	ians,
Madal, Javan	Caucasus,	Modes, Ionians and Athenians.
Total	Europe.	Iberiana.
Meshech,	•	Muscovites,
Tiras.		Thracians.

### POST-DILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.

PERSONS II. AND III. PERSON TO CALL OF ABRAHAM, 427 YEARS. THENCE TO EXCOR, 430 YEARS.

DIRTH.	BIRTH.		DEATH.	DEATH.	AGE.
B. C.	A. M.		B. C.	A. M.	
2948	1056	Nosh	1998	2006	950
2446	1558	Shem	1846	2158	600
2346	1658	Arphaxad	1908	2096	438
2311	1693	Salah	1878	2126	433
2251	1723	Eber	1817	2187	464
2247	1757	Peleg	2008	1996	230
2217	1787	Reu	1978	2026	239
2185	1819	Serug	1955	2049	230
2155	1849	Nahor	2007	1997	148
2126	1878	Terah	1921	2063	205
1996	2018	Abram (called 1921 B. C.)	1821	2183	175
1896	2108	Imac	1716	2288	180
1836	2168	Jacob	1689	2815	147
1743	9261	Joseph	1633	2371	110
1571	2433	Mouse (Exode 1491 B. C.)	1461	2553	120

### THE WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS.

PERSOD IV. 40 YEARS.



## GOVERNORS AND JUDGES OVER ISRAEL

PERIOD V. 356 YEARS.

	REMARKS.
Joshus	" 3 years. " 22 years. " 6 years. " 7 years. " 10 years. " 8 years. " High Priest 40 years. Samson, twelfth Judge. Judged 20 years.

# TABULAR ARRANGEMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

PROBABLE AUTHORS, AND TIME COVERED BY THE WRITINGS.

PROBA	LE AUTHORS, AND TIME COVERE	YEARS B. C.	
TITLES  GENESIS EXODUS. LEVITICUS NUMBERS. DEUTERONOMY. JOSHUA JUDGES. RUTH. 1 SAMUEL. 1 KINGS 2 KINGS 1 CHRONICLES 2 CHRONICLES EZRA NEILEMIAU.	Moses. Moses. Joshua Samuel Unknown. Compiled by Samuel, Nathan, Gad, or others. Probably Jeremiah Ezra and others. Ezra	From 4004 to 1635. From 1635 to 1491. 1491. From 1491 to 1451. 1451. From 1451 to 1425. From 1452 to 1120. From 1241 to 1231. From 1135 to 1055. From 1055 to 1016. From 1016 to 889. From 4004 to 532. From 4004 to 433. From 4004 to 435. From 4004 to 435.	ine of narratine.

# AUTHORSHIP AND DATES OF POETICAL BOOKS.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES OF TODELOW YEARS B. C.				
AUTHORSE		YEARS B. C.		
TITLES.	AUTHORS.  July, or perhaps Moses	hut before the Exode, B. C. 1101		
PRAIMS	Polomon and perhaps others	About 1016. About 1000. About 1000. About 1000.		
PROVERSS		.,		

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### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

TITLES.	Dat <b>es</b> , b. c.	Kings of Judan.	Kings of Israel.
	Between		
JONAH	856-784	Jossh, Amaziah or Azariah	Jehu & Jehoahaz, or Jossh & Jero-
Amos	810-795	Uzziah	Jeroboam II.
hosea	810-725	Uzz.ah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	Jeroboum II.
ISA1AH	810698	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	Zechariah, Shallum, Monahem, Po- kuhiah, Pokah and Hoshea.
JOEL	810-660	Uzziah or Manasseh	Same as above.
MICAH	758 - 699	Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah	Pekah and Hoshea.
N	720-698	Hezekiah	Israel led captive.
ZEPHANIAH	640609	Josiah	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
JEREMIAH	628-586	Josiah.	
LAMENTATIONS	628586	Supposed to have been written on the death   of Josials.	
HABAKKUK	612-598	Jeholakim.	
DANIEL	6-6-534	During the Captivity.	
OBADIAH	588583	After the capture of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar.	
EZEKIEL	583562	Captivity.	
HAGGAL	520518	After the return from Babylon,	
ZECHARIAH	520-518	1	
MALACHI	436-420		

### PROPHECIES IN HISTORICAL BOOKS OF OLD TESTAMENT.

WHERE FOUND.	SUBJECT.	WHERR FULFILLED.
Genesis xv. 5	Posterity of Abraham	1 Chron. xxi. 5-6.
Genesis xv. 13	The Bondage	Genesis xlvi. 3-7.
Genesis xv. 14-16	The Deliverance	Exodus xii, 34-41.
Genesis xviii. 10	Concerning Isaac	Genesis xxi, 1-3.
Genesis xxxvil. 7	Joseph's advancement	Genesis xlii, 6.
Joshua vi. 26	Building of Jericho	1 Kings xvi. 24.
l Samuel ii. 34	Death of Eli's sous.	1 Samuel iv. 11.
l Samuel xxviii. 19	Death of Saul	1 Samuel xxxi. 3-6.
l Kings xiii. 2	Josi h and his mission.	2 Kings xxiii. 1'.
1 Kings xiii. 22	Death of a Prophet	1 Kings xiii, 24-26.
Kings xiv. 10	Extinction of the House of Jeroboam	1 Kings xv. 29.
Kings xvi. 3.	Destruction of House of Baasha	1 Kings xvi, 11.
Kings xvii. 1		1 Kings xviii, 41.
	Drought in Ahab's reign	
Kings xx. 22	Syrian Invesion	1 Kings xx. 26.
Kings xxl. 19	Penalty for murder of Naboth	1 Kings xxii. 33.
Kings xxi. 21	Destruction of House of Ahab	2 Kings x 11.
l Kings xxi.23	Jezebel's death.	2 Kings ix. 35-37.
2 Kings iii 17	Miraculous supply of water	2 Kings iti. xx.
2 Kings vii. 1	Supply of food	2 Kings vil. 18,
Kings vil. 2	The unbelieving lord (death of)	2 Kiygs vii. 17-20.
2 Kings x. 30	Reign of Jehu's sons	2 Kings xv. 12.
Kings xix. 7	Death of king of Assyria	2 Kings xix. 35-37.
2 King - xx. 17	Babylonish Captivity	2 Kings xxiv, 10-16.

### PARABLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

SUBJECT.	By WHOM SPOKEN.	WIERE SPOKEN.	TEXT.
Concerning Israel and Moab	Balaam	Mt. Pisgah	Num. xxiii. 24,
Trees making a King	Jotham	Mt. Gerizim	Judges ix. 7-15.
The Strong bringing forth Sweetness	Samson	Timnath	Judges xiv. 14.
The Ewe Lamb.	Nathan	Jerusalem	2 Samuel xii. 1-4.
Strife of the Two Brothers	Woman of Tekoah.	Jerusalem	2 Samuel xiv. 5-7.
The Escaped Prisoner	A Prophet	Near Samaria	1 Kings xx. 35-40.
The Thistle and the Cedar	Jehoush	Jerusalem	2 Kings xiv. 9.
Vineyard yielding Wild Grapes	Isaiah	Jernsalem	Isaiah v. 1-6.
Comperison of Israel with a Vine	David		
The Vine	Ezekiel		
Eagle and the Vine	Ezckiel	Babylon	Ezekiel xvii. 3-10.
The Lion's Whelps	Ezekiel	Babylon	
Wasted Vine	Ezekiel	Babylon	
The Bolling Pot	Ezekiel		
Holy Flesh	Haggai	Jerusalem	Haggai ii. 11-14.

# MIRAQUIOUS EVENTS IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

T OIT	TESTAMENT HIS	1022
MIRAQUIOUS EVENTS IN OLD	PLACE	TEXT.
	Fine	Genesis vil.
SUBJECT.	World	Genesis xi. 7-9.
SUBJECT.  The beluge  The of tongues	World Babel	Genesis xix. 11.
The Deluge Confusion of tongues tonfusion amtten with blindness	Babel	Genesis xix. 24-25.
The Deluge Confusion of tongues Sodomics smitten with blindness Confusion of the cities of the plain	Sodom and Gomorrah	Genesis xix. 26.
The Deligo Confusion of tongues Confusion of the with blindness. Destruction of the cities of the plain Destruction when to pillar of salt	Sodom and Gomortum Near Sodom	Exodus lii. 2.
Confusion of the with blindness. Folomities smitten with blindness. Lots wife turned to pillar of salt	Near Sodom Horeb	Exodus iv. 2, 5.
Postunction of the cities of the pinni.  Destruction of the cities of salt  The burning bush  The burning human into a serpent	Horeb	Ex dus iv. 6-7.
Destriction  Lot's wife turned to pillar of sait.  The burning bush.  Moses' rod turned into a serpent	Horeb	Ex dus vii. 10-12.
The burning bush.  Moses' rod turned into a serpent  The leprous hand  The leprous hand	Horeb Egypt	Exodus vii.—xii.
The burning duried into a serpent  Muses' rod turned into a serpent  Ann's rod turned into a serpent  Area been plagues of Egypt	Egypt	Exodus xiii. 20-21.
Mose' rod turned.  The leprous hand.  Azon's rod turned into a serpent.  The ten plagues of Egypt.  The rollar of cloud.	Egypt Egypt	Exodus xiv. 21-30
Aaron's rod turned into	Egypt	Exodus XV. 23-25.
The leprous name.  Aaron's rod turned into a serpent.  The ten plagues of Egypt.  The pillar of cloud.  Passage of the Red Sen.  Passage of the Red Sen.	Egypt Marah	Exodus xv. 13-35.
The ten pusses.  The pillar of cloud.  Passage of the Red Ser.  The bitter waters made sweet	Marah Wilderness	Exodus xvii. 5-7.
The pillar of the Red Sev. Passage of the Red Sev. The bitter waters made sweet. Quals and Manna. Quals and Manna.	Wilderness Wilderness	Leviticus x. 1-2.
Passage of the safers made sweet.  The bitter waters made sweet.  Qualis and Manna.  Water from the rock.  Water from Jondab and Abihu.	Wilderness Sinai	Num. xil. 10-13.
Qualit and Manna	Sinal Hazeroth	Num. xvi. 31-55.
Water from the rockd Abihu	Hazeroth	Num. xvi. 41-50.
The bitter Wanna.  Water from the ruck.  Destruction of Nadab and Abihu.  Curs of Miriam's leprosy.  Destruction of Korah and his adherents.  Destruction of the plague.	Kadesh	Num. xvii. 1-3.
Curs of Miriam's leprony, his adherents	Kadesh	Num. xxi. 8-9.
Destruction of Coron steprosy.  Cure of Miriam's leprosy.  Destruction of Korah and his adherents.  The visitation of the plague.  Fructification of Aaron's rod	Kadesh Wilderness	Num. xxii. 28-31.
The visitation of the plague	Wilderness Pethor	Joshua iii. 14-19
Emetification of Aaron's round	Pethor	Joshua vi. 6-21.
Destruction of A of the plague. The visitation of A arou's rod. The brazen serpent. Balaam's ass speaks. Passace of the Jordan. A serpection of the walls of Jericho.	Jordan Jericho	Joshua x. 12-13.
Deleam's ass speaks.	Jericho Gibeon	Judges xv. 19.
The brazen servents.  Balsam's ass speaks. Passare of the Jordan. Pestruction of the walls of Jericho. Consideration of the walls of Jericho.	Gibeon Lehi	1 Samuel V. 1-12.
Destruction of the walls of	Lehi	1 Samuel vi. 19.
Balsam's ass special Passare of the Jordan.  Destruction of the walls of Jericho.  Su and moon stand still.  Slaking of Samson's thirs'.  Philistines slain before the Ark.  Philistines for the Bethshemeshites.	Ashdod Beth-Shemesh	1 Samuel xii. 18.
Sua and moon sathirs! Slaking of Samson's thirs! Philistines slain before the Ark. Smiting of the Bethshemeshites	Beth-Shemesh	2 Samuel vi. 7.
Staking of Samson Philistines slain before the Ark Smiting of the Bethshemeshites. The harvest rain.	Gilgal Perez	2 Samuel Viii. 4-0.
Philistines sum: Smiting of the Bethshemeshites. The harvest rain. Uzzah killed Uzzah killed	Perez Bethel	1 Kings xvii. 14-16.
mus harvest raid	BethelZarephath	1 Kings xvii. 17-4. 1 Kings xvii. 30-33.
The hat killed	Zarephath	1 Kings xviii. 30-33.
Smiting of the butter the harvest rain.  Uzzah kilied.  Jerobam's hand withered.  The widow's meal increased.  The widow's meal from the dead.	Mt. Carmel	2 Kings i. 9-12.
my widow's ment increased	Mt. Carmel Samaria	2 Kings ii. 8.
Uzzah Kilied. Jerob san's hand withered. The widow's med Increased. Widow's son raised from the dead. Consumption of Elijha's sacrifice. Destruction of Ahazish's captains and fifties.	Samaria Jordan	Z Kings ii. 11.
Widow's son Interest State Consumption of Elijah's sacrification of Ahazish's captains and fifties The Jordan divided The Jordan of Elijah	Jordan	2 Kings ii. 14.
Consumption of Ahazlah's captains and The Jordan divided. Translation of Elijah. This partet the waters.	Jordan	2 Kings ii. 21.
Destruction of All Programmers of The Jordan divided. Translation of Etijah. Elisha parteth the waters. Elisha parteth des waters.	Jordan Jericho	2 Kings iii. 16-20.
The solution of Elijah	Jericho Moab	2 Kings iv. 1-7. 2 Kings iv. 1-7.
Till he mirteth the Waters	Moab	2 Kings iv. 32-37. 2 Kings iv. 42-44.
The Jordan arthur Translation of Elijah.  Elisla parteth the waters.  Waters of Jericho made sweet. The army supplied with water.  The cruse of oil faileth not.	Moab Shun <b>am</b>	2 Kings iv. 42-44.
Witters or annualised Willi Witters.	Shunam	2 Kings v. 10-14.
The arms call faileth not	Gilcal	2 Kings v. 20-27.
The Cities restored	· · · · I Iordan · · · · ·	2 Kings vi 5-7
Fullation of twenty loaves	Samaria	2 Kings vi. 18.
Miracle of the Nasanian heated in Jordan. Gehazi made leprous The axe floats The axe floats	Jordan Dothan	2 Kings 6.7.
Namination 1 terrous	Dothan	2 Kings till 21
Gellazi zin	Samaria	2 Kings XIII. 35.
The axe with blindness		2 Kings XIX. 0-11.
Syrialis out overthrown.	Terusalem	2 Kings XX. 16-20.
Byrian and antiquest and an artist and an artist and artist artist and artist artist and artist artist and artist ar	1 Tornsalem	2 Chron. XX
A dead of Sounacherio's	Jerusticii	Daniel III. 16-04
Destruction mond back on the difference	Babylon	Daniel
The shade	Rabylon	Jonan 1.
Uzznan the fiery farmaco	Med terranea	Jonuly il.
Destruction of the data.  The shadow goes back on the data.  Uzziah's lepresy.  Escape from the flery furnace	Med terranea Mediterranea	
The shadow Keepersy. Uzziah's leptesy. Escape from the fiery furnace. Daniel escapes from the lions Daniel in the whale's belly		
Uzziah's lepho- Bscape from the fiery furnace. Daniel escapes from the lions. Jonali in the whale's belly. Jo-ah delivered.		
Jonah denvers		т B00K8.

# CHRONOLOGY OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

PLACE WHERE WRITTEN, AND AUTHORS.

		HISTORICAL BOOK	KS. AUTHOR.	WHERE WRITTEN.
DATE.  A. D.  35-61  61  63-64  64  67	Gospel of St. Matthew		1 200	Rome (producty)

#### THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

DATE.	TITLE.	Aurnoz.	WHERE WRITTEN.
A. U.	Divid Potate As the Mhamalaniana	St. Paul	Corinth.
512	First Epistle to the Themalonians		
52	Second Epistic to the Thessalonians	St. Paul	Corinth.
5657	Epistle to the Galatians	St. Paul	Ephesus.
57	First Epistle to the Corinthians	8t. Paul	Ephesus.
58	Second Epistle to the Corinthians	St. Paul	Philippi.
68	Epistle to the Romans	St. Paul	Corinth.
61	Epistle to the Ephesians	St. Paul	Rome.
62	Epistle to the Philippians	St. Paul	Rome.
62	Epistle to the Colossians.	St. Paul	Rome.
63	Epi-tle to Philemon	Sr. Paul	Rome.
63	Epistle to the Hebrews	St. Paul	Rome.
64	First Epistle to Tim thy	St. Paul	Laudicea.
64	Epistle to Titus	St. Paul	Ephesus (probably)
65	Second Epistle to Timothy	St. Paul	Rome (probably).
95—96 Published in 97.	REVELATION	Et. John	Patmos.

#### THE CENERAL EPISTLES.

DATE.	TITLE.	AUTHOR.	WHERE WRITTEN.
A. D. 61 63 65 65 97—99 97—98	Epistic of St. James First Epistic of St. Peter Second Epistic of St. Peter Epistic of St. Jude. First Epistic of St. John Second Epistic of St. John Third Epistic of St. John	St. Peter	Babylon, Babylon, Syria, Ephesus, Ephesus,

### CHRONOLOGY OF OUR LORD'S LIFE. # (Lewin.)

- B. C. 6 (about Feb. 22). Birth of John the Paptist; the time of Elizabeth's conception being inferred from the calculation that the course of Abia went out of office on May 22, 8, c. 7.
- B. C. 6 (about Aug. 1). THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST; nearly two years before the death of Herod (Matt. ii. 16). The Census under Sentius Saturniaus, who displaced Varus before Sept. 2, s. c. 6.
- B. C. 4, April 1. Death of Herod at Jericho. Return of the Holy Family from Egypt.
- A. D. 6. Banishment of Archelaus. Cyrenius, profect of Syria.
- A. D. 7. Completion of the Census of Cyronius. Christ at the Passover (April 9th).
- A. D. 28 (about August or September). Preaching of Juhn the Baptist, in the first year of the Sabbatic cycle, in the sixth year of which our Lord's Ministry closed.
- A. D. 29 (February). Baptism of Jesus. Age 33. (February to March.) The Temptation.
- A. D. 29-A. D. 33. The Duration of Christ's Ministry, from Passover to Passover, four full years, in accordance with Luke xill. 7.
- A. D. 29. FIRST PASSOVER, ending April 2.
- Opening of our Lord's Ministry at Jerusalem. Imprisonment of John. A. D. 29 Autumn). Beginning of Christ's Ministry in Galilee. Its duration-three years and six months. First Circuit in Gauler, including (about October) his rejection at Nazareth.
- A. D. 29 to A. D. 30 (Spring). Second Galilean Circuit: duration-four or five months.
- A. D. 30 (Spring). Third Galilean Circuit.

April 22. The δευτεροπρώτον σάββατον, έ. ε., the first Sabbath of the second month (Jyar). May 27. The Penterost, this year on a Sabbath. The "Feast" of John v.

Jesus returns to Galilee.

Sermon on the Mount.

A. D. 30. Pourth Galilean Circuit. (Autumn). Return to Capernaum.

A. D. 31 (About April). Death of John the Bantist.

April 19 (10 of Nisan). Feeding of the Five Thousand.

April 21. The discourse of John vi. on the Sabbath before the Passover. Sept. 20. Feast of the Tabernacles (John vil. 1).

Sept. 23 (about). Jesus reaches Jerusalem. He withdraws, probably to Bethabars. Nov. 28 to Dec. 5. Feast of Dedication (John x.)

Jesus returned to Bethabara (John x. 31).

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Lewin gives this latitude to the about thirty (wore) of Luke III. 23.

\*\*Thirty was enabled to find this date is in the fact that Isalah Ixi, was the appointed lesson of the daily service about the Peast of Tabernacies, which in this year full on toutoer II.

It is right to say that this chronology, though prepared with great care, differs unsterially from those of Greawell, Ellicott, Andrewa, appries. Geltie, and others who have bestowed equal research on the subject. There is a strong probability that the date of the otria of Christ is too carly, and of his leath too late. (See Table on page 1018.)

### OHRONOLOGY OF OUR LORD'S LIFE. (Lewin.)-Continued.

A. D. 32 (beginning). Death and raising of Lazarus.

Jesus retires to Ephraim, and thence to Cassarea Philippi.

Return to Capernaum. Tribute Money.

Passover, April 13. Beginning of our Lord's last circuit, occupying a year, and terminating at Jerusalem.

A. D. 32 (Autumn). The warning to fice out of Galilee.

A. D. 33 (Spring). The circuit resumed from West to East, along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, in the direction of Persea, and so across the Jordan.

Recrosses the Jordan to Jericho.

Friday, March 27. Arrives at Bethany, six days before the Passover.

Saturday, March 23. Rest at Bothany on the Sabbath evening. Suppor at the house of Simon.

Palm Sunday, March 29. Jesus enters Jerusalem.

Monday, March 30-Thursday, April 2. As in our narrative.

Thursday, April 2 (evening). The Passover and Lord's Supper.

Good Friday, April 3. The Crucifixion. Jesus expires at 3 P. M.

Easter Sunday, April 5. The Resurrection.

Thursday, May 14. The Ascension.

Sunday, May 24. Day of Pentecost.

#### PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

PLACE.	SUBJECT.	TEXT.
Galilee	Mote and Beam	Matt. vii. 3-5; Luke vi. 39-42.
Galilee	Foundation of Rock and Sand	Matt. vii. 24-27; Luke vi. 48-49.
v14	The two Debtors	Luke vii. 41-50.
Galilee	The Barren Fig-tree	Luke xiii. 6-9.
Galilee	The Sower	Matt. xiii.; Mark iv. Luke viii.
Galilee	Wheat and Tares.	Matt. xiil. 24–30.
Galilee	Seed cast in the Ground	Mark iv. 26-29.
Galilee	The Mustard-seed	Matt. xiii. 31–32; Mark iv. 30–32; Luke xiii   19.
Galilee	The Leaven	Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20-21.
Galilee	The buried Treasure	Matt. xiii, 44.
Galilee	Pearl of Great Price	Matt. xiii. 45-46.
Galilee	Casting of the Net	Matt. xiii. 47–50.
Capernaum }	Parables of the Lost Sheep	Matt. xviii. 12–14; and Luke xv. 3–7.
Capernaum	The Merciless Debtor	Matt. xviii. 23-35.
Jerusalem	Good Samaritan	Luke x. 30-37.
via	Chief Seats at the Wedding	Luke xiv. 7-12.
_ via	The Midnight Friend	Luke xi. 5-13.
Capernaum	Return of Unclean Spirit	l.uke xi. 24-26.
via	The Rich Fool	Luke xii. 16-21.
Jerusalem Jerusalem-cia.	The Shepherd and Sheep.	John x. 1–18. Luke xii. 37–39.
via	The Faithful Servants	Luke xii. 42-48.
via.	The Closed Door.	Luke xiii. 24-27.
via.	The Great Supper.	Luke xiv. 16-25.
via.	Building a Tower.	Luke xiv. 28-30.
via.	A King going to War	Luke xiv. 31-33.
via	The lost Piece of Money	Luke xv. 8-9.
via	The Prodigal Son	Luke xv. 11-32.
via	The Unjust Steward	Luko xvi. 1-8.
ria	Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke xvi. 19-31.
via	The Unjust Judge	Luke xviii. 1-8.
ria	Pharisee and Publican	Luke xviii. 9-14.
ria	Laborers in the Vineyard	Matt. xx. 1-16.
ria	Ten Servants and Ten Pounds	Luke xix. 12-27.
Jerusalem	The two Sons	Matt. xxi. 28-32.
Jerusalem	The leased Vineyard.	Matt. xxi. 33-44.
Jerusalem	The Marriage Feast	Matt. xxii. 1-14.
Jerusalem	The Fig-tree	Matt. xxiv. 32.
Jerusalem	Faithful and false Servant.	Matt. xxiv. 45-51.
Jerusalem	Wise and foolish Virgins	Matt. xxv. 1-13.
Jerusalem	The Talents	Matt. xxv. 14-30.
Joi usatem	i onech and douts	Matt. xxv. 31-46.

### MIRAGLES OF JESUS-OHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED.

	MIRACLES.	PLACE OF OCCURRENCE.	WHERE DESCRIBED.
1.	Conversion of water into wine	Cana of Galilee	John ii. 1-11.
2.	Cure of the nobleman's son at Capernaum	Cana of Galilee	John iv. 46-54.
3.	The miraculous draught of fishes	Sea of Galilee	Luke v. 1-11.
4.	Man possessed with the devil healed	Capernaum	Mark i. 22-28.
5.	Peter's mother-in-law cured of a fever	Capernaum	Mark i. 30-31.
6.	A leper healed	Capernaum	Mark I. 40-45.
7.	The Centurion's servant healed	Capernaum	Matt. viii. 5-13,
8.	The widow's son raised from the dead	Nain	Luke vii. 11-17.
9.	The tempest calmed	Sea of Galilee	Matt. viii. 23-27.
10.	The demoniacs of Gadara cured	Gadara	Matt. viii. 28-34.
11.	Man with the palsy cured	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 1-8.
12.	Jairus' daughter raised from the dead	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 18-19, 23-26
13.	Woman with an issue of blood healed	Capernaum	Luke viii. 43–48.
14.	Two blind men given their sight	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 27-31.
15.	The dumb man given his speech	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 32-33.
16.	An infirm man of Bethesda healed	Jerusalem	John v. 1-9.
17.	The withered hand made whole	Judea	Matt. xii. 10-13.
18.	Man with a devil healed	Capernaum	Matt. xii. 22-23.
19.	Five thousand people fed	Decapolis	Matt. xiv. 15-21
20.	Daughter of womau of Canaan healed	Near Tyre	Matt. xv. 22-28.
21.	Deaf and dumb man cured	Decapolis	Mark vii. 31-37.
22.	Four thousand persons fed	Decapolis	Matt. xv. 32-39.
23.	A blind man given his sight	Bethsaida	Mark viii. 22-26.
24.	Boy with a devil cured	Tabor	Matt. xvii. 14-21.
25.	A man born blind is made to see	Jerusalem	John ix.
26.	A woman with an infirmity of eighteen years' standing	1	
	cured	Galilee	Luke xiii. 11–17.
27.	The dropsy cured	Galilee	Luke xiv. 1-6.
28.	Ten lepers cleansed	Samaria	Luke xvii. 11-19.
29.	Lazarus raised from the dead	Bethany	Johu xi.
30.	Two blind men given sight	Jericho	Matt. xx. 80-34.
31.	The fig-tree blasted	Olivet	Matt. xxi. 18-22.
32.	Malchus' ear healed	Gethsemane	Luke xxii. 50-51.
33.	Second miraculous draught of fishes	Sea of Galilee	John xxi, 1-14.

### THE TWELVE ORIGINAL APOSTLES.

NAME.	REMARKS.	
1. Peter	Originally called Simon. Son of Jonas. Occupation, a fisherman. About the same age as Christ. Probably suffered martyrdom at Rome, with Paul.	
2. Andrew	Brother of Peter. Same occupation. Said to have been crucified at Patrso in Achaia, on a cross shaped like X, hence, St. Andrew's Cross.	
3. Jamps	Son of Zebedee. A fisherman. Put to death in A.D. 44, by Herod Agrippa.	
4. Јоня	Younger brother of James. Same occupation. Driven to Patmos. Lived to a great age, and died the last of the apostles, as late as a. D. 39 or 100.	
5. Pullip	Of Bethsaida. History uncertain, before and after his call.	
6. BARTHOLOMEW.	Of Cana. Probably went eastward to India. Tradition says he was flayed alive, and afterwards crucified with his head downwards.	
7. Тиомав	Preached in Persia. After history uncertain.	
8. MATTHEW	The Publican. A tax gatherer. Author of the Gospel according to St. Majthew. Preached in Judea, and among foreign nations. Time and manner of death uncertain.	
9. James	Son of Alpheus. Younger brother of Jude. Preached at Jerusalem. Was thrown from	
10. JUDE	the Temple and killed.  Called also Lebbeus. After history unknown.	
11. Simon	A Canaanite. Labored in Egypt, and supposed to have been crucified in Judea during the reign of Domitian.	
12. Judas	Called also Iscariot. Son of Simon. The treasurer of the Twelve. Betrayed Christ.  Attempted suicide by hanging, but the rope breaking, his abdomen was lacerated by the fall, and he died a double death.	

### TABULAR MEMOIR OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES.

CONTREARS & HOWSON.	Lewis.	TABLE OF ST. PAUL'S LIFE.
A. D.	A. D.	
<b>∆bout 5 or 6.</b>	About 11.	Birth of Saul at Tarsus.
36.	86 or 37.	Martyrdom of St. Stephen.
87.	87.	Conversion of St. Paul.
89.	39.	His first visit to Jerusalem.
	(Feast of Tabernacies.)	·
<b>39—4</b> 0.	3940.	Rest of the Jewish Churches.
40.	40.	Conversion of Cornelius.
44.	43.	Barnabas fetches Saul from Tarsus to Antioch.
44.	44.	Famine; and death of Herod Agrippa I.
<b>44</b> or <b>4</b> 5.	44.	Barnabas and Saul go to Jerusal with the collection. (Pauly
	(Before the Passover.)	second visit.)
48—49.	45-40.	Paul's First Missionary Journey.
<b>50.</b>	1 43.	Paul and Barnabas go up to the Council at Jerusalem.
	1	Paul's third visit.
<b>51.</b>	49.	Paul's Scond Missionary Journey.
52.	52.	Paul arrives at Corinth, where he stays 18 months.
<b></b>	(February.)	
54.	53.	Paul arrives at Jerusalem.
(Pentecost.)	(Tabernacles.)	His fourth visit. †
(1 casecour.)	( Tuber numbers)	Winters at Antioch (Lewin).
5 <b>.</b> f.	54.	Paul's Third Missionary Journey.
	(Beginning.)	Taul & Inita Dissionary Journey.
(Latter half.)	(Degining.)	He marker Enhance where he stone there &H
55.		He reaches Ephosus, where he stays three full years
	(May.)	(Lewin).
<b>5</b> 5—57.	54—∴7. 57.	Y 70-1 6: 16: 1:1:-
57.		Leaves Ephesus for Macedonia.
	(About Pentecost.)	
57—58.	57—58.	Winters at Corinth (three months).
<b>5</b> 8.	59.	Reaches Philippi at the Passover.
	(March 27.)	
58.	58.	Reaches Jerusalem at Pentecost.
	(May 17.)	Paul's fifth visit, and arrest in the Temple.
<b>58</b> —60.	58—60.	Imprisonment at Casarea.
6/).	60.	Festus succeeds Felix.
	(About Midsummer.)	
60.	CO.	Paul sails for Rome.
	(End of August)	
	(About Nov. 1.)	His shipwreck at Malta.
61.	61.	Paul reaches Rome.
	(Beginning of March.)	
	61-63.	His first imprisonment (two years).
63.	63.	On his release, Paul
	(Spring.)	goes to Macedonia   sails for Jerusalem, and visits Antioch.
		and Asia Minor.   Colosses and Ephesus.
	i	(C. & H.)
64—66.	<b>\</b> 64.	(Lewin.) Paul, after visiting Crete, leaves Ephesus for Mace-
(In Spain?)	1	donia.
67—48.	<b>64</b> —65.	Winters at Nicopolis.
	(5.	(Lowin.) Visits Dalmatia, and returns through Macedonia and
	i l	Trous to Ephesus, where he is arrested and sent to Lome.
68,	64,	Martyrdom of St. Paul, at Rome.
(May or June.)	(June 29.)	****
(	1 ,	

Dr. Howson identifies this visit with that of Galatians if., and places the collision with Peter at Antioch after it.

iMr. Lewin identifies this visit with that of Galatiene is, and places the collision with Peter at Antioch after it.

### THE WORDS OF JESUS-A TABLE OF HIS DISCOURSES, IN THEIR PROPER 🗢 ORDER.

	TITLE.	PLACE OF DELIVERY.	WHERE RECORDED.
ī.	Kemarks to Nicodemus	Jerusalem	John iii. 1, 21.
2.	Conversation with the woman of Samaria	Sychar	John iv. 1, 42.
3.	Remarks in the Synagogue at Nazareth	Nazareth	Luke iv. 16, 31.
4.	The sermon on the mount	Mount of Olives	Matt. v., vi., vii.
5.	Charge to the Apostles	Galilee	Matt. x.
6.	Doom of Chorazin, Bethwaida, etc	Galileo	Matt. xi. 20, 24.
7.	Declaration after healing the infirm man of Bethesda	Jerusalem	John v.
8.	Comments on the conduct of the disciples in the corn field	Judea	Matt. xii. 1, 8,
9.	Denial that His miracles were due to the power of Beelzebub	Capernaum	Matt. xii. 25-46.
lo.	The bread of life	Capernaum	John vi. 25-71.
11.	On internal purity	Capernaum	Matt. xv. 1, 20.
12.	Concerning the forgiveness of injuries	Capernaum	Matt. xviii.
13.	Declaration at the feast of tabernacles	Jerusalem	John vii.
14.	Concerning the woman taken in adultery	Jerusalem	John viit.
15.	Words referring to His sheep	Jerusalem	John x.
16.	The Scribes and Pharisees denounced	Peræa	Luke xi. 29, 36,
17.	About humility and prudence	Galileo	Luke xiv. 7, 14.
18.	How to reach heaven	Peræa	Matt. xix. 16, 30.
19.	Remarks upon His sufferings	On way to Jerusalem.	Matt xx. 17, 19.
20.	The Pharisees denounced	Jerusalem	Matt. xxiii.
21.	The destruction of Jerusalem foretold	Jerusalem	Matt xxiv.
22.	Words of comfort to His disciples at the Last Supper	Jerusalem	John xv., xvi., xvii.
23.	Remarks on the way to Gethsemane	Jerusalem	Matt. xxvi. 31, 36.
24.	Last words to His disciples on earth	Jerusalem	Matt. xxviii. 16-23.

ANALYSIS OF THE OLD	AND NEW TESTAMENTS.
BOOKS in the Old Testament         39           Chapters         9:29           Verses         23,214           Words         592,439           Letters         2,728,100	The word and occurs in the Old Testament 35,543 times. The same in the New Testament also occurs 10,684 times. The word Jeharch occurs 6,855 times. The middle book of the Old Testament is Proverbs. The middle chapter is Job xxix.
BOOK8 in the New Testament         27           Chapters         260           Verse         7,959           Words         181,253           Letters         808,980	The middle verse is 2d Chron., chapter xx., the 17th Verse. The least verse is 1st of Chron., chapter i., and 1st verse. The middle book in the New Testament is 2d Thessalonians. The middle chapters are Romans xiii. and xiv.
THE APOCRYPHA hath 183 chapters, 6,081 verses, and 152, 185 words. The middle chapter and the least in the Bible, is Pealm exvii. The middle verse is the 8th of Paalm exviii.	The middle verse is Acts xvii., 17th verse. The least verse is in John xi., verse 35. The 21st verse, chapter vii. of Ezrs, has all the letters of the alphabet. The xixth chapter of the 2d of Kings and chapter xxxvii. of Issish are both alike.

### PLAN FOR READING THE BIBLE THROUGH IN A YEAR.

The following plans for reading the Bible may be pursued with profit:

Regarding the exixth Psalm as consisting of eleven chapters, each containing two parts or subdivisions of the same, the whole number of chapters in the Old Testament equals 939. By reading three of these chapters on each of the 313 week days of the year, the whole number will be exhausted (313  $\times$  3 = 939).

So in the New Testament, there are 260 chapters. By reading five of these on each of the 52 Sabbaths of the year, the whole will be exhausted (52  $\times$  5 = 260).

Or, the following plan may be adopted, observing the division of the exixth Psalm already indicated. Read three chapters each week day and five on the Sabbath, thus:-two each day from the Old Testament, and one (three on the Sabbath) from either Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, or the New Testament.

Without those books, the Old Testament contains two chapters a day for the year. By placing them with the New Testament, there are sufficient chapters to admit of reading one each week day and three on each Sabbath, less eight chapters.

Psalms exvii, and exxxi. should be read together. Also Psalms exxxiii. and exxxiv. Tabulated, this plan appears thus:



JANUARY 1.	Genesis i	Psalms i.	JULY 2.	1 Chron. xxvil.	Matt. xxvii.
8.	Genesis xv	Psalms x.	9.	2 Chron. xii	Mark viii.
15.	Genesis xxix	Padnis xix.	16.	2 Chron, xxvi.	Luke i.
22.	Genesis xliii	Psalms xxviii.	23.	Ezra iv	Luke x.
29.	Exodus vil	Psalms xxxvii.	30.	Nehemiah vili.	Luke xix.
FIRRUARY 5.	Exodus xxi	Psaims xlvi.	August 6.	Esther ix	John iv.
12.	Exodus xxxv.	Pealms lv.	13.	Job xili	John xiii.
19.	Leviticus ix	Psalms lxiv.	20.	Job xxvii	Acts i.
26.	Leviticus xxiii.	Psalms lxxiii.	27.	Job xli	Acts x.
MARCH 5.	Numbers x	Psalms lxxxii.	SEPTEMBER., 3.	Isaiah xiii	Acts xix.
12.	Num. xxiv	Psalms xci.	10.	Isaiah xxvii	Acts xxviii,
19.	Deuteron, ii	Psalms c.	17.	Isaiah xli	Romans ix.
26.	Deut, xvi	Psalms cix.	24.	Isuiah lv	1 Cor. ii.
APRIL 2.	Deut. xxx	Psa ms exviii.	Остовев 1.	Jeremiah iii	1 Corinth. xf.
9.	Joshua x	Paums exix.	8.	Jer. xvii	2 Corinth, iv.
16.	Joshua xxiv	Padms exxvii.	15.	Jer. xxxi	2 Corinth, xiii.
23,	Judges xiv	Psalms exxxviii.	2 .	Jer. xlv	Ephesians iii.
30.	1 Samuel id	Psalms extvii.	29.	Ezekiel ii	Colossians ii.
May 7.	1 Sam, xvii	Proverbs vi.	NOVEMBER. 5.	Ezek. xvi	2 Thess. if.
14.	1 Sam. xxxi	Proverbs xv.	12.	Ezek xxx	2 Timothy ii.
21,	2 Sam. xiv	Proverbs xxiv.	19.	Ezek, xliv	Hebrews iii.
28.	1 Kings iv	Eccle iastes ii.	2 i.	Daniel x	Hebrews xi.
JUNE 4.	1 Kings xviii	Ecclesi istes xi.	<b>Десемвек 3.</b>	Hosen xi	1 Peter iii.
11.	2 Kings x	Sol. Song viii.	10.	Amos ix	l John iv.
18.	2 Kings x siv	Matthew ix.	17.	Nehemiah i	Revelation v.
25.	1 Chron xiii	Matthew Xviii.	1 24.	Zechariah v	Revelation xiv.
			]] 31.	Malachi iv	Revelation xxii.

But no plan for reading the Bible should be adopted which tends to sacrifice an understanding of its contents. Let your study of the Holy Word be constant and earnest, and more good will be accomplished than if its pages were hurriedly scanned.

### MIRACLES PERFORMED BY AND AMONG THE APOSTLES. RECORDED IN THE ACTS.

	MIRACLES.	PLACE OF OCCURRENCE.	WHERE DESCRIBED.
1.	A lame man healed by St. Peter	Jernsalem	Acts iii. 1-11.
2.	Death of Ananias and Sapphira	Jerusalem	Acts v. 1-10.
3.	Wonderful deeds done by the Apostles	Jerusalem	Acta v. 12-16.
4.	St. Peter and St. John impart the Holy Ghost	Samaria	Acis viii. 14-17.
5.		Between Jerusalem &	
		Damascus	Acts ix. 1-9.
6.	Eneas healed of a palsy by St. Peter	Lydda	Acta ix. 33-34.
7.	Tabitha or Doreas raised from the dead by St. Peter	Joppa	Acts ix. 36-41.
8.	St. Peter rescued from prison by an angel	Jerusalem	Acts xii. 717.
9.	Herod punished with death	Jerosalem	Acts xii, 21-23,
19,	Elymas the sorcerer is stricken with blindness	Paphos	Acts xiii, 6-11.
11.	A cripple healed by St. Paul,	Lystra	Acts xiv. 8-10.
12.		Philippi	Acts xvi. 16-18.
13.	Doors of the prison of St. Paul and Sdas opened by an earth-	1	1
	quake	Philippi	Acts xvi. 25-40.
14.	St. Paul imparts the Holy Chost	Counth	Acts x1x, 1-6.
15.	Many persons healed by St. Paul.	Corinth	Acts xix, 11-12,
14.	St. Paul ruses Eutychus from the dead	roas	Acts xx. 9-12.
17.	St. Paul renders a viper barmless.	Melita	Acts xxviii. 3-6,
18.		Melita	Acts xxviii, 7-9,

### TABLE,

Showing, at one view, which of the Patriarchs were contemporary with each other, and consequently how easy it was to hand down from Adam to Jacob the particulars of the Creation, and fall of Man.

NOAH	SHEM
was contemporary with	was contemporary with
	LAMECH 93
	METHUSELAH 93
	NOAH 443
MAHALALEEL	and after the Flord with
	was contemporary with Years. LAMECH

### FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE CLOSING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON, A. D. 100.

PERIOD X. 100 YEARS.

B. C.	JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
5 4 2	Birth of Christ, probably Dec. 25th. His circumcision, presentation in Temple, and flight of his family to Egypt. Roturn from Egypt.	28th year of reign of Augustus Cæsar at Rome. Herod orders the massicro of all male infants under two years old. Death of Herod and his son Antipater, and divis-
	<b>.</b>	ion of his kingdom.
A. D.	To be a second to Demon seconds of Goods	Familie in Rome.
6 8	Judea annexed to Roman province of Syria.  Jesus being 12 years old, is taken by his parents to	Familie in Rome.
•	the Temple.	
9	Birth of St. Paul.	
26	Christ baptized by John. His public ministry be-	Death of Augustus.
	gins.	
28	John the Baptist beheaded.	Tiberius, emperor at Rome.
29	Crucifixion of Christ, probably on Friday, April 15th.	Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea. Tiberius friendly to the Christians.
80	Office of Deacon created.	
31	Martyrdom of St. Stephen.	Pilate deposed, and commits suicide.
83	Conversion of Saul.	Agrippa made king of Judea.
36	St. Matthew writes his gospel.	Death of Agrippa.
42 44	Rise of term Christian. St. James beheaded.	
45	Famine in Judea.	Paraman Claudina Tandan Canadad
62	St. Mark dies.	Emperor Claudius. London founded.
61	Persecution of the Jews.	Nero, emperor at Rome,
66	Jews at war with Rome.	Great slaughter of Jews in Syria.
67	Second imprisonment of Paul at Rome.	Defeat of Jews by Vesi asian.
68	Martyrdom of Paul and Peter.	Nero deposed, and commits suicide. Vespasian, emperor at Rome. Jerusalem taken and de- stroyed by Titus.
95	Second persecution of Christians,	Plague in Rome. Vespasian dies.
96	St. John released from bunishment.	Domitian killed. End of reign of Comers.
100	Death of St. John at Ephesus.	Trajan, emperor of Rome.

# PROPHECIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT RELATIVE TO THE ADVENT, PERSON, OFFICES, SUFFERINGS, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF THE MESSIAH, AND THEIR FULFILMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Prophecy.	Fulfilment.	Prophecy.	Fulfilment.
Gen. iii. 15.	Gal. iv. 4.	Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.	Matt. xi. 4, 5.
Gen. xlix. 10.	Luke ii. 1, 3-5; Heb. vil. 14.	Isa. xl. 3, 11,	Luke vii. 27, 28; John z
Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18.	nes in. s.	11	11, 14.
Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.	{ John iv. 19; vi. 14; Luke   vii. 16.		Mark i. 14. { Mark xv. 19, 25: Luke ix
Psalm 1 ii. 2, 6, 7.	Heb. i 8; Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; Luke i. 32, 33.	Isa. lili. 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10–12.	58; Luke xxiii. 34; Matt xxvii. 38, 57-60; Eth. v
Ps. viii. 5.	Heb. ii. 9; xii. 2.		2; Philip. ii. 8-10.
Ps. xvi. 9, 10.	Acts ii, 31.	Isa. lix. 20.	John iv. 42.
Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18	( xxiii. 35-37.	Jer. xxiil. 5, 6. Jer. xxxi. 22. Daniel vii. 13, 14.	John xviii. 33, 36, 37. Luke i. 26–35. Eph. i. 21.
Ps. xxxiv. 29. Ps. xli. 9; lv. 12-14,	John xix. 32, 33. Luke xxii. 3, 4.	Daniel ix. 4, 17-19.	{
Ps. lxviii. 18.	1 Cor. xv. 4; Acts i. 9.	Micah v. 2.	Luke il. 4-6.
Ps. 1xix. 21.	John xix. 29; Matt. xxvii. 48.	Joel ii. 28.	Acts il. 1-4; iv. 31.
Ps. lxxx. 27, 36.	1 Tim. vi. 15.	Zech, ix. 9.	Matt. xxi. 7-10.
Ps. cx. 4.	Heb. iv. 14; viii. 1.	Zech. xi. 12, 13,	Matt. xxvii, 3-3,
Isaiah vii. 14.	Matt. i. 24, 25.	Zech. xii. 10.	John xix. 34.
Isu. ix. 1, 2. 6, 7.	Matt. iv. 12, 17; John i. 1, 14; xii. 46; Heb. vii. 14.	Haggal il. 7. Malachi ill. 1.	Luke ii. 10. Matt. ii. 1-10; iii. L
Isa, xxix 18	Matt. xv. 30, 31.	l <b>t</b>	1

### CHRONOLOGICAL HARMONY OF OUR LORD'S LIFE.

Carefully compiled from the researches of Greswell, Ellicott, Andrews, Smith, Farrar, and Geikie.

- B. C. 5 (probably about August 1). Birth of John the Baptist.
- 13. C. 4 (probably in January, or at latest, February 1). BIRTH OF OUR LORD, at Bethlehem; deduced from the concurrence of various historic data.
- B C. 4 (probably in March 15—20). The Flight into Egypt, and shortly after the Slaughter of the Innocents, by Herod's decree.
- B. C. 4 (April 1 to 5). Death of HEROD THE GREAT, at Jericho.
- B. C. 4 (probably in May or June). ARCHELAUS Ethnarch (not King) of Judea, Sumaria, and Idumea. Heromantical Antipas, Tetrarch of Perma and Galilee.
- B. C. 4 (summer of the year). Return of the Holy Family from Egypt, and residence in Nazareth.
- A. D. 1. The erroneous date assigned by Eusebius, Tertullian and Dionysius Exiguus, as that of the birth of our Lord.
- A. D. 5. Birth of St. Paul, according to Conybeare and Howson. Lewin makes this date A. D. 11.
- A. D. 6. Archelaus deposed and banished by Augustus. Judsea annexed to the province of Syria, then governed by Cyr. nius, as procurator or prefect.
- A. D. 8 (April 9). Jesus with His parents at the Passover, and with the Rabbis or Doctors in the Temple.
- A. D. 12. Tiberius triumphs over the Germans, and is associated with the Emperor Augustus in the Comman i of the Army and the provinces.
- A. D. 26. PONTIUS PILATE procurator or Governor of Syria.
- A. D. 26 (Summer). John the Baptist commences preaching in the Wilderness of Judea. The beginning of the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, counting from A. D. 12, as above.
- A. D. 27 (Winter. Probably January or February). Baptism of Jesus by John, at the fords of the Jordan, on the east side.
- A. D. 27 (February, or possibly January-February). Jesus tempted in the Wilderness.
- A. D. 27 (February). Deputation of Priests and Levites to John the Baptist.
- A. D. 27 (not far from March 1). Return of Jesus to Galilee, and calling of Audrew and Simon, John (and probably James), Philip and Nathanael, to be His disciples.
- A. D. 27 (early in March). Miracle at the wedding at Cana in Galilee. Subsequent miracles at Capernaum.
- A. D. 27 (April 9). The first Passover of Jesus' Ministry. The Cleansing of the Temple.
- A. D. 27 (April to May). Short stay in Jerusalem. Miracles. Interview with Nicodemus.
- A. D. 27 (May—November). Withdrawal from Jerusalem to some place in Judea, north of and not fur from Jerusalem. Ills disciples baptize under His direction. Complaint of some of John's adherents to him, and his reply.
- A. D. 27 (November and December). Jesus departs into Galilee by way of Samaria. At Jacob's Well. The Woman of Samaria. First fruits among the Samaritans.
- A. D. 23 (January—March). Jesus spends some weeks in retirement in Galilee. Imprisonment of John the Baptist. The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth was perhaps at this time, though possibly later.
- A. D. 28 (March 29). The second Passover of Jesus' Ministry. The healing of the impotent mun.
- A. D. 28 (April—May). Jesus begins His Ministry in Galilee. The four disciples called. Miracles of healing at Capernaum.
- A. D. 28 (May). First Circuit in Galilee. Healing of the leper. Casting out devils.
- A. D. 28 (Summer). Return to Capernaum. Healing of the paralytic, and the man with the withered hand. Choice of the Apostles. Sermon on the Mount. Healing of Centurion's servant. Raising of the Widow's Son at Main. Message of John the Baptist to Jesus, and His reply.
- A. D. 28 (Autumn). Jesus anointed by the woman who was a sinner. Healing of the blind and dumb possessed, at Capernaum. He is reviled by the Pharisees; teaches in parables and stills the tempest.
- A. D. 28 (Autumn). Heals demoniacs in Gergesa; returns to Capernaum; Matthew's feast; woman with issue of blood healed; Jairus' daughter raised; two blind men and a dumb man possessed, healed; the Pharisees blassheme.
- A. D. 29 (Winter). Second visit to Nazareth; sending out of the Twelve. Death of John the Baptist. Jesus returns to Capernaum.
- A. D. 29 (Spring, probably April). Crossing the sea; feeding of the 5,000; return to Capernaum; discourse there concerning the Bread of Life.
- A. D. 29 (Summer). Jesus visits the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; heals the daughter of the Syro-Phornician woman; visits the region of Decapolis (the ten cities east of the Jordan); feeds the 4,000 and performs other miracles.
- A. D. 29 (Summer). Jesus returns to Capernaum; the Pharisees break with Him openly; He denounces their hypocrisy. He again crosses the sea; heals the blind man at Bethsalda, and departs with His disciples northward to Cassarea Philippi and the foot-hills of Mt. Hermon.
- A. D. 29 (Summer). Near Cæsarea Philippi, Peter declares Him to be the Messiah. Six days later He is transfigured on one of the peaks of Mt. Hermon. Coming down from the mountain He heals the lunatic child.



- A. D. 29 (Autumn. September or October). Jesus journeys through Galilee; teaches the disciples; pays the tribute-money at Capernaum; goes up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles; teaches in the Temple; efforts to arrest Him, and afterward to stone Him. The adulteress brought before Him. The blind man from birth healed; returns to Galilee.
- A. D. 29 (November—December). Final departure from Galilee; sends out the Seventy and follows them. A Samaritan village rejects Him. Great multitudes attend Him. His parable of the Good Samaritan. The Lord's Prayer given. Heals a dumb man possessed of a devil. The Pharisees blaspheme Him. He rebukes their hypocray. Parables.
- A. D. 29 (November—December). Jesus is told of Pilate's murder of the Galileans. His parable of the fig tree; He heals a woman of an infirmity of eighteen years standing; He is warned against Herod.
- A. D. 23 (December). At Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication. His visit to Mary and Martha. The Jews attempt to stone Him. He goes into Peræs. There He dines with a Pharisee, and heals a man with dropsy. Many of His parables delivered at this time.
- A. D. 30 (January—February). Sickness, death and resurrection of Lazarus. The Jews conspire to put Him to death. He retires to Ephraim, and sojourns there till within five or six weeks of the Passover. He journeys on the borders of Samaria and Judea, and performs the miracles, and utters the parables and teachings recorded in Luke xvii. 11—xix. 28.
- A. D. 30 (March). Jesus again announces His death. The ambition of James and John. Healing of blind man at Jericho. Zaccheus; parable of the pounds. Departure to Bethany.
- A. D. 30 (April 1, probably Saturday). Supper at Bethany, and anointing of Jesus by Mary.
- A. D. 30 (Sunday and Monday, April 2 and 3). Triumphal entry into Jerusalem; visit to the Temple and return to Bethany. Cursing of the fig tree. Jesus purifies the Temple a second time; in the evening He returns to Bethany.
- A. D. 30 (Tuesday, April 4). Teaching in the Temple; He utters several parables. Attempts of His enemies to entangle Him; the poor widows gift to the treasury; the Greeks who desire to see Him. The Voice from Heaven; His departure to the Mount of Olives, and discourse concerning the end of the world. Return to Bethany. Judas agrees to betray Him.
- A. D. 30 (Wednesday, April 5). In retirement at Bethany. (Thursday, April 6.) Sends Peter and John to make ready the Passover.
- A. D. 30 (Thursday afternoon and evening, April 6). The Paschal Supper. Washing the disciples' feet. Identification of Judas as His betrayer. Institution of the Lord's Eupper; forecells Peter's denials. Comforts and instructs Illis disciples, and prays with and for them. Jesus at Gethsemane.
- A. D. 30 (Thursday midnight and Friday morning, April 7, 1 to 5 A. M.) Judas with an armed band invades Gethsemane, betray- Jesus, and He is led away bound to the house of Annas, and thence to palace of Caiaphas; He is condemned for blasphemy. He is mocked by His enemies.
- A. D. 3º (Friday morning, April 7, 5-9 A. M.) Jesus brought again before the council, and thence taken before Pilate, charged with sedition. Pilate finds Him inn-cent and attempts to release Him; but popular clamor prevails, and He is scourged, and given up to be crucified.
- A D. 30 (Friday, April 7, 9 л. м.-З Р. м.) JESUS IS CRUCHTED AT GOLGOTHA. While on the cross He is revited by Ills enemies; pardons the dying shief commends His mother to John, forgives His enemies; darkness covers the land; HE priss; the earth shakes and rocks are resit.
- A D. 30 (Friday, April 7, 8 to 6 P. M.) The body of Jesus taken down from the cross, given to Joseph of Arimathes, and laid in his sepulchre.
- A. D. 30 (Sunday, April 9, morning, afternoon, and evening). Resurgaection or Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene; to the two disciples going to Emmans; to Peter, and to the eleven at Jerusalem.
- A. D. 30 (Sunday, April 16, and subsequently in April—May). Appearance to the eleven, including Thomas; appearance to seven disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and to five hundred at a mountain in Galilee.
- A. D. 30 (Thursday, May 18). Final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and Ascension to heaven from the coastern slope of the Mount of Olives.



